MESTER

SPECIAL ISSUE:
MEMORY AND HISTORY:
REMEMBERING, FORGETTING, AND FORGIVING

XXXVI

2007

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

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Introduction

The key question posed by this Special Issue in Mester's thirty-sixth year is what role do memory and history play in the critical study of literary, linguistic, and visual cultures across the Luso-Hispanic worlds. What especially interested us was to explore that which has been ignored, buried, stripped of its own identity, yet strives to remain alive despite the effects of political and physical time. We invited submissions that analyse the ways in which the various forms of memory, such as remembering, forgetting, and forgiving, shape the anatomy of the personal and the political. We were curious to examine the effects of amnesia, melancholia, and nostalgia as ethics of survival and/or repression on cultural production and individual memory. We asked who and what inform the different narratives of cultural commemoration? How do authorities construct and re-construct history? Is memory a human right? Who is allowed to remember? While thinking through these and other similar questions, we wanted to investigate the role played by literary and artistic contributions in such rich processes. The following twelve articles you are about to read contemplate these issues from a variety of perspectives. After reading them, we hope that you will feel compelled to continue discussing the multiplicity of answers given by our astute contributors and raise some of your own questions. In this way our Special Issue will have fulfilled its main purpose of creating new openings for further intellectual expatiation.

I am particularly pleased to present a broad representation of different genres and areas of focus, which include studies about works from the Southern Cone, the Carribean, Brasil, Mexico, and Spain. Missing are submissions researching Central American and Portuguese themes, which we hope to see in the future. The essays also vary in the expressive media they analyse and there should be something for those interested not only in literary but also in critical theory, cultural, gender, and visual studies. Choosing these particular twelve among the nearly seventy submitted articles was not an easy task and we would like to acknowledge the contributions by those who did not enter this collection and whose articles you might read in another journal instead. The members of the Editorial Board did an excellent job of carefully reading through all of the numerous essays and then overseeing various revisions of those that were recommended for publication. It was a

privilege to work with and learn from the dedicated colleagues who joined me this year. I am thankful for their assistance and respect for my efforts to keep everything moving forward and put it all together despite the usual challenges.

Needless to say, very special gratitude goes to our wonderful Faculty Advisors: Adriana Bergero, John Dagenais, Roberta Johnson, Anna More, and Alessandra Santos. Among them, Professor Roberta Johnson went far and beyond her responsibility to generously offer her expertise and time with consistent encouragement and invaluable input. Our deepest thanks also go to the UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Del Amo Foundation, and the UCLA Graduate Students Association for their continuous and much needed financial sponsorship. Last but not least, without the skill of our loyal friend and layout person, William Morosi, who has witnessed *Mester* go through several transformations, you would not be enjoying the professional appearance of our journal.

From generation to generation of different Editors-in-Chief and their visions, what remains is the desire to survive and to be remembered as an inspiration by other graduate students elsewhere embarking on a similar journey. Though the academic road is often uncertain and discouraging at times, to see the fruits of your labor materialize into something creative and meaningful, makes it worthwhile at the end.

On that note, with profound reverence we dedicate Mester XXXVI to two of our dear Professors Guillermo E. Hernández and Carroll B. Johnson, who have unexpectedly passed away during the course of crafting this issue. We thank very much Professor C. Brian Morris for kindly offering his translations of two sonnets by Francisco de Quevedo in memory of his colleagues. Professor G. E. Hernández and Professor C. B. Johnson will never cease to live through the rich legacy they leave behind—all of their students, colleagues, family, and friends, as well as their exceptional research and writing, which many of us will continue to treasure in the years to come.

Jasmina Arsova
Editor-in-Chief 2006–2007
Mester Literary Journal

Articles

Viewing History through Exile: Music and Nostalgia in Cabrera Infante's *The Lost City*

Gabriel Ignacio Barreneche
Rollins College

In 2006, exiled Cuban novelist Guillermo Cabrera Infante's lifelong dream of bringing the world of pre-Revolutionary Havana nightlife to the silver screen was finally realized in the Andy García film *The Lost City*. The last work before his death in 2005, *The Lost City* represents a filmic version of a world about to end: the culture and music of Cuba before the triumph of the Revolution and the subsequent exile of hundreds of thousands of Cubans. There are striking points of contact between one of Cabrera Infante's first works, the acclaimed 1967 experimental novel *Tres tristes tigres*, and *The Lost City*, his swan song screenplay 16 years in the making, as well as significant points of divergence between the film and his 1974 work *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*. Through an analysis of the use and function of music and nostalgia in these three works, this paper will consider how Cabrera Infante's re-creation of revolutionary Cuba in *The Lost City* reflects, on the one hand, a stylized and musical world in the spirit of *Tres tristes tigres*, but on the other hand, a narrow, Manichean vision of the historical events of the time that is not evident in his previous works. Through this analysis, one can conclude that screenwriter's nostalgic portrayal of Havana in *The Lost City* reveals a marked shift in his perspective on exile and the events of the Cuban Revolution almost 40 years after leaving Cuba.

In 1983, Cuban-born actor Andy García began working on a project that he hoped would be a Cuban version of the classic film *Casablanca*. A friend recommended that he read Cabrera Infante's novel *Tres tristes tigres* for its rich descriptions of Havana nightlife before 1959. After meeting the author in person in London to discuss his project, García decided that he had found his scriptwriter. For his part, Cabrera Infante was no stranger to the film industry. His

writing credits include numerous film reviews for the literary magazine *Carteles*, the films *Vanishing Point* (1971) and *Wonderwall* (1968), as well as having founded the Cinemateca Cubana. Cabrera Infante's first draft of what was to become the script for *The Lost City* came in at a hefty 351 pages in length, roughly three pounds in weight, and as such, it required significant revision and editing to reduce its massive scope. In spite of having a working script and a vision of the film laid out, García encountered numerous obstacles in procuring financing for the film within the traditional Hollywood circles. Finally, in 2004, the producer Frank Mancuso, Jr. secured financing for the film and gave García permission to begin production. With only 35 days to film and a modest budget of less than $10 million, García began the task of bringing Cabrera Infante's script to life.

The script for *The Lost City* traces the experience of the Fellove family from the final days of the Batista regime through the initial moments of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The protagonist is Fico Fellove, the eldest son of the family and owner of a Tropicana-esque nightclub called *El Trópico*.[1] The seemingly apolitical Fico is pulled into the conflict caused by the Revolution through the actions of his brothers. Youngest brother Ricardo joins Fidel's forces in the Sierra Maestra, and Luis, one of the leaders of the rebellious student group *El Directorio Revolucionario*, is killed following a failed attack on Batista and the Presidential Palace. The ideological tensions in the film rise when Fico falls in love with Aurora, Luis' widow. Whereas Fico and his university professor father distrust Fidel's intentions, Aurora, the proclaimed "Widow of the Revolution," allies herself with the *Fidelistas*.[2] As the political situation becomes more unbearable for Fico as a result of the state's seizure of his nightclub, he decides to leave his beloved Havana and seek exile in New York City.

In addition to the political and personal drama of the Fellove family, one of the unifying themes of *The Lost City* is the music and culture of Cuba. For García, the film's genesis stems from his interest in and passion for the music of this island. He explains that, "For me the entire project started with the music of Cuba, and that's where it all began."[3] Throughout the film, music not only re-creates the ambiance of the time period, but it also functions as one of the main characters in its ability to communicate directly with the viewer. García, who has been involved in numerous musical projects over the past decade,[4] explains that, "The lyrics of the music of these songs are always

commenting [. . .] they're really the protagonists of the film [. . .] they're constantly commenting on the situations." For example, in the scene where Fico's *Fidelista* brother Ricardo visits his uncle's tobacco plantation to confiscate it for the state, an old *vitrola* plays the Miguel Matamoros song *Te picó la abeja* as he approaches his uncle's bohío. According to García, in this scene, the *abeja* represents Ricardo, and his uncle Donoso is the unfortunate soul who is about to be "stung" by the Revolution. If the viewer were to recognize and understand the lyrics of this song, he/she would be able to anticipate Ricardo's impending betrayal.[5] In other words, the music in the background effectively foreshadows the action about to take place on screen.

Different genres of Cuban music present in the film enhance particular moments on the screen. First of all, the Afro-Cuban musical pieces, a number of which were arranged by García himself, heighten the dramatic tension during critical points in the film. For example, a musical piece with the Afro-Cuban Abakuá rhythm plays while Leonela, *El Trópico*'s prima ballerina, interprets the piece through dance.[6] At the highest point of rhythmic tension, a bomb explodes, tragically killing Leonela. Another major turning point brought to the fore through the film's Afro-Cuban music takes place at an Afro-Cuban social club dance being filmed by Fico. During the dance, one of the *santeras* approaches Aurora, Fico's widowed sister-in-law and love interest, and announces to her that "El tiempo no está con ustedes," forecasting the end of Aurora and Fico's relationship, as well as the end of their way of life in Cuba. Finally, another Afro-Cuban musical number brings the dramatic scene of the attack on the presidential palace to a fever pitch. On the other hand, *bolero* inspired musical pieces move the nostalgic and romantic scenes. For example, the love theme *Si me pudieras querer* by famed Cuban crooner Bola de Nieve echoes the conflicted and melancholic emotions that Fico feels towards Aurora, the unattainable love of his life. Whereas García's use of distinctive Afro-Cuban rhythms enhances the scenes of significant dramatic tension in the film, the romantic *boleros* that play during the scenes with Fico and Aurora reflect a less conflicted and more nostalgic view of Havana. In other words, the Afro-Cuban music, representative of the social and ethnic tensions that underlay the Cuban Revolution, contrasts with the melodic and sentimental *boleros* that are predominant in the soundtrack of the film, suggesting a preference for this idealized vision of Havana.

The music of *The Lost City* also functions on a symbolic level as the focal point of Fico's life. He is the proud owner of the *El Trópico* nightclub and is committed to preserving music as the center of his establishment, rejecting American mobster Meyer Lansky's proposal to set up gambling operations at the club. The shows at *El Trópico* remind the viewer of an idyllic vision of Cuba free from political and social conflict. As such, unlike his brothers, Fico does not take any sides until the Revolution literally comes to his club in the form of Party officials censoring the content of his shows at *El Trópico* and outlawing the use of the saxophone because of its "imperialist" roots. This artistic censorship precipitates Fico's complete disenchantment with the Revolution and eventual decision to exile himself. Finally, having chosen to leave Cuba, one of the few personal items that Fico tries to take with him as an exile is a collection of Cuban records, an attempt to physically bring the musical legacy of his homeland with him.

For Fico, the desire to take Cuba's music with him to New York City represents the challenge of preserving the last piece of his life that the Revolution has not taken from him. Because of this divisive political conflict, Fico loses both of his brothers, his nightclub, as well as Aurora, the love of his life. García explains, "[. . .] ultimately the main metaphor of *The Lost City*, is about finding solace in the one thing that's never betrayed you, which is your culture, or in Fico's case, his music." In the emotional scene where Fico is interrogated at the security checkpoint before boarding his flight into exile, the soldier asks Fico what he is carrying in his bags, to which Fico responds, "Only what I need." The only items the viewer sees in Fico's suitcase are his LPs and a movie camera, concrete symbols of his "need" to bring Cuba's music with him into exile. Similarly, by reopening *El Trópico* in New York City at the end of the film, Fico creates a space that is free from the divisiveness of politics and the Revolution and tries to find solace in music, as García describes. In contrast to the socially conscious *música de protesta* of the post-Revolution period that aimed to give voice to the marginalized and oppressed, the lyrical *boleros* and energetic *cha-cha-chas* played throughout the film wax nostalgic about lost love, and celebrate dance, fun and good times. For Fico as well as for Cabrera Infante and García, the music of *The Lost City* transcends the conflicts of the time and offers a space of comfort and reassurance. Regardless of political affiliations or points

of view on the merits of the Revolution, aside from the scenes with Afro-Cuban music discussed earlier, the film's music opens a door to a non-conflictive, nostalgic world in which the exile can re-create his or her idealized memory of *la patria*.

Similarly, Cabrera Infante's 1967 novel *Tres tristes tigres* has at its core the music and rhythms of Cuba. While on a theoretical level, *TTT* is a text about the shortcomings of the written word, much of its plotline centers on the world of music and nightlife in Havana shortly before the triumph of the Revolution.[7] Throughout the text, there are numerous characters who are themselves musicians and singers, such as La Estrella, Cuba Venegas, Freddy, and Eribó, and much of the word play and word usage in the text is musical in nature. One of the major narrative lines of *TTT*, the interpolated story "Ella cantaba boleros," describes the encounters of the bolero singer La Estrella with the *tigres*. So significant was this portion of *TTT* that in 1996 these interpolated vignettes were published as the separate, cohesive work, *Ella cantaba boleros*. Furthermore, throughout the entirety of the text, the characters regularly describe their experiences and their reality with numerous references to pop culture, film, and, music (Souza 87–88). For example, during their nocturnal drive around Havana in the "Bachata" section, Silvestre and Cué discuss the philosophical implications of playing Bach's music at 65 kilometers per hour while cruising along the Malecón hundreds of years after his death. Cué comments:

> Bach, Juan Sebastián, el barroco marido fornicante de la reveladora Ana Magdalena, el padre contrapuntístico de su armonioso hijo Carl Friedrich Emmanuel, el ciego de Bonn, el sordo de Lepanto, el manco maravilloso, el autor de ese manual de todo preso espiritual, El Arte de la fuga. [. . .] ¿Qué diría el viejo Bacho si supiera que su música viaja por el Malecón de La Habana, en el trópico, a sesenta y cinco kilómetros por hora? ¿Qué le daría más miedo? ¿Qué sería pavoroso para él? ¿El tempo a que viaja sonando el bajo continuo? ¿O el espacio, la distancia hasta donde llegaron sus ondas sonoras organizadas? (Cabrera Infante, *TTT* 294)

TTT's relationship with music is also evidenced in its structure. In a personal letter from Cabrera Infante to the critic Ardis Nelson,

our author comments that *TTT* resembles a rhapsody in its form (54). In a rhapsody, the music for instruments is irregular in its form and allows for a great deal of improvisation. Much like a rhapsody, *TTT* is a text full of these improvisations and irregularities. Nelson furthers the connection between *TTT* and music by dividing the text into the components of a concert. For example, the section called "Los debutantes" can be considered an overture with its varied motifs reoccurring throughout the work, and the "Bachata" section a fugue and counterpoint (57).

The function of music in *TTT* goes beyond merely an attempt to authentically reproduce the context of Cabrera Infante's Havana. Throughout *TTT*, Cabrera Infante questions the authority of the written word through the text's emphasis on orality and the spoken word, its unceasing use of word play and puns, and through the deconstruction of language itself. For example, as seen in Cabrera Infante's *Advertencia* to his reader, "algunas páginas se deben oír mejor que se leen, y no sería mala idea leerlas en voz alta" (9). In other words, through this warning to the reader, Cabrera Infante casts a shadow of doubt on the primacy of reading and writing as opposed to oral communication, and questions whether the spoken word can be accurately transcribed to the written form. There are numerous examples of the use of orality throughout *TTT*, including the prolific oral wordplay of the character of Bustrófedon as well as the transcription of the Cuban accent and speech patterns into the written word of the text. Bustrófedon not only argues that literature should be written in non-traditional places, such as on bathroom walls, but also written in the air, that is, in the manner of a literature of the spoken word. He explains to his friend Códac, "[. . .] la otra literatura hay que escribirla en el aire, queriendo decir que había que hacerla hablando, digo yo, o si quieres alguna clase de posteridad, la grabas, así, y luego la borras así (haciendo las dos cosas ese día, menos con las muestras pasadas) y todos contentos" (257–58). Critic Alfred MacAdam argues that *TTT* demonstrates that the written sign/written word cannot fully capture or retain the meaning of the spoken word, "*Tres tristes tigres* es una pirámide verbal, la representación sistemática de la incapacidad del signo escrito de retener la palabra hablada" (206). By emphasizing alternative modes of communication, in this case orality and music, Cabrera Infante further undermines the authority of the written word as the principal means of communication and literature as the primary method of artistic expression.[8]

Similarly, through music's function as a character and as an alternative method of expression, *The Lost City* questions the primacy of the visual medium, the image, as well as the spoken word, namely dialogue, as the most important vehicles for communication within a film. For example, *The Lost City*'s music makes a direct emotive connection with the audience of the film. Cabrera Infante and García were keenly aware of one of the significant segments of the audience for this film: the Cuban exile community. The music of *The Lost City* taps into the memory banks of this specific group of viewers in order to enhance the action on screen. The film's authentic music also awakens a sense of nostalgia that fictitious dialogues between characters could never summon. Cultural studies critic David Shumway explains that film soundtracks using previously recorded music rely on the audience's familiarity with the music in order to produce an emotive response (36–37).[9] Upon hearing popular music of the times, a direct link is made between the exiled viewer and the actions on screen because it is the same music to which he or she would listen at that historical moment in that specific space.

Whereas the use of music as an alternative means of communication in *The Lost City* is consistent with Cabrera Infante's earlier works, the function of nostalgia in the film demonstrates a significant evolution in his vision of the recounting of historical events, including the Revolution. On the one hand, with its lively and optimistic vision of Havana just before the Revolution, *TTT* nostalgically captures the final days of a world that was about to change forever. Cabrera Infante's 1974 work *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*, a collection of vignettes tracing Cuba's troubled history, problematizes the process of historical recollection through its multifaceted presentation of similar historical events and questionable sources. While the nostalgic, idealized vision of Havana nightlife is present in both *TTT* and *The Lost City,* Cabrera Infante's film presents an absolutist, moralistic vision of history with none of the ambiguity of *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* or the light-heartedness of *TTT*.

Completed over 40 years after Cabrera Infante's exile from Cuba, *The Lost City* sets a nostalgic tone and mood through the music of the initial frames of the film. The first scene opens with the image of famed trumpeter Chocolate Armenteros sounding out the Virgilio Martí tune *Cuba Linda*. Those familiar with the song will immediately recall its lyrics: "Cuba linda de mi vida / Cuba linda siempre te

recordaré / Yo quisiera verte ahora / Como la primera vez [. . .]" The stage is set for an experience of memory, remembrance, and nostalgia, a yearning for a place that no longer exists. Projected through the lens of nostalgia, the world of late 1950s Havana becomes distorted by the exile's need to re-create it in an idealized way. This idealized vision is like seeing Havana "por primera vez."[10] Throughout the film, the character of Fico seems to sense that the world of Havana as he knows it is about to change forever. For example, on numerous occasions he takes out his home movie camera in order to film music and dance numbers as well as romantic moments he shares with Aurora at the beach. Whereas the scenes relating to the brothers Ricardo and Luis illustrate the political upheaval happening in Havana in the final days of the Revolution, Fico's plot line and his love interest in Aurora allow Cabrera Infante to wax nostalgic about Havana's nightlife and social scene. One such occasion is when Fico's mother asks him to take Aurora out so that she can distract herself from mourning the death of Luis. In a sporty red convertible, Fico and Aurora cruise the streets of Havana and partake of the rhythms and music of the city. One of the crucial stops during their foray is a chance to watch the legendary Benny Moré perform live. These scenes function not only to move the love story plotline along, but they also heighten the sense of foreboding and melancholy of a world that is about to disappear. Jameson argues that these idealized scenes are characteristic of the "nostalgia film:"

> Nostalgia film [. . .] seeks to generate images and simulacra of the past, thereby—in a social situation in which genuine historicity or class traditions have become enfeebled—producing something like a pseudopast for consumption as a compensation and a substitute for, but also a displacement of, that different kind of past which has (along with active visions of the future) been a necessary component for groups of people in other situations in the projection of their praxis and the energizing of their collective project ("On Magic Realism in Film" 310).[11]

As with the use of music in the film, the "pseudopast" portrayal of Havana through Fico's life in *The Lost City* reflects a nostalgia for a simpler time free from the political and social conflicts of the day.

This same nostalgic presentation of the final moments of pre-Revolutionary Havana can be seen throughout *TTT*. Cabrera Infante began writing the text while he was already outside of Cuba in 1961. During this time as a cultural attaché in Brussels, as he was writing *TTT* Cabrera Infante found himself homesick and nostalgic for the Cuba he left behind (Souza 77). Cabrera Infante explains how being in Brussels inspired his writing: "Fue allí donde de veras se gestó *Tres tristes tigres*. No podía atajar el alud de memorias que me venían cada noche impidiéndome dormir y para exorcizarlas comencé a escribir toda esa primera parte del libro que se llama 'Los debutantes'. [. . .]" ("Memoria Plural" 1087). Critic Raymond Souza notes that the "Bachata" section was in fact written during Cabrera Infante's final trip to Havana in 1965 due to the death of his mother, thus explaining the sense of nostalgia and loss that permeates that particular section (84). Ardis Nelson argues that *TTT* represents a snapshot of Havana in the 1950s and that Cabrera Infante is trying to preserve, through his writing, a world that is about to disappear because of the historical forces at work in Cuba. As a result of this realization, Cabrera Infante tries to immortalize this world's language, characters, problems and dreams through his fiction (39). In a 1977 interview with Danubio Torres Fierro, Cabrera Infante explains how one of his motivations for writing *TTT* was to continue the preservation of Havana nightlife that his brother's controversial film "P.M." had begun before it was censored by the Castro regime:

> La literatura está hecha de nostalgia, lo sabemos, pero si al principio me atacó una suerte de manía ecológica, de preservar la fauna nocturna que tan bien había retratado *P.M.* y que el juicio de la Biblioteca Nacional demostró que estaba condenada a desaparecer, en Bruselas hubo un ataque nostálgico por el hábitat de esa fauna, que es el *genius loci* del libro—es decir, La Habana y concretamente La Habana de noche, porque en el libro se recogen muchas noches que se quieren fundir en una sola, larga noche— ("Memoria Plural" 1087–88).

Much like a naturalist trying to preserve an endangered species and its habitat, Cabrera Infante attempts to rescue the Havana of his imagination and memory through the literary and filmic media. With

the passage of time, the sense of urgency for the exile to immortalize his or her lost world (or lost city) becomes more pronounced. Cabrera Infante comments that the inspiration for *TTT* resulted from each passing year away from Cuba, "No me perjudica la lejanía de Cuba sino que me beneficia: allí nunca hubiera podido escribir *TTT*, ni siquiera en La Habana relativamente libre de 1959. Me hacía falta no sólo la lejanía, sino la convicción de que esa luz de la vela estaba apagada, que solamente por la literatura podría recobrar ese pasado" ("Memoria Plural" 1095).

Similarly, in *The Lost City*, this nostalgia for Havana grows stronger through Fico's experiences. Even before leaving Cuba, Fico lives in the memories of his past life through the items he carries with him. During the same scene where the soldier who inspects Fico's belongings finds his collection of records, he also notices a swizzle stick from *El Trópico* in Fico's pocket and comments: "You worms are strange. Not yet gone, and you are already carrying souvenirs. You can't take Cuba with you, you know?" This is exactly what Fico attempts to do, take Cuba with him and transplant it to New York City. As soon as he arrives in New York, Fico sets up his projector in his cramped hotel room and watches his home movies with sadness and longing. What is questionable about this scene is that like most exiles who left Cuba soon after the triumph of the Revolution, Fico would probably have imagined Fidel's rule to be temporary and that he would soon return home to Cuba. In other words, at the moment of his departure, Fico does not really know that he is leaving Cuba forever. Furthermore, his New York experience consists of staying in his hotel room watching home movies of Cuba, listening to records, and later going to work washing dishes at Victor's Café, an elegant Cuban restaurant. The only occasions when the viewer sees Fico outside in New York is when he visits the statue of José Martí in Central Park and when he dines with the character of The Writer at *El Dragón Rojo*, a Cuban-Chinese restaurant. In other words, while in exile Fico tries to find solace in the Cuban elements already in New York. It would seem that by immediately making Fico a prisoner of nostalgia, Cabrera Infante imparts his own vision of exile, that of the need to re-create the lost city of Havana, almost 40 years after leaving Cuba in 1965.

Fico's final sublimation into the world of nostalgia takes form at the end of the film. As the tune "Cuba Linda" plays for a final time and García's voiceover reads from Martí's *Versos sencillos*, Fico literally

steps into the frame of his home movies, clambers up the staircase of what appears to be a nightclub, and joins the *comparsa* of musicians and dancers at the top of the staircase. Then screen titles reveal that Fico soon opened a New York version of his nightclub *El Trópico*, thus completing the return to his previous life, distant from Cuba only in geographic distance. In other words, the experience of exile leads Fico to duplicate his Cuban life in New York exactly as it was before he left Havana, save for the love of Aurora, who had allied herself with the Revolution. Fico's longing to re-create Havana through his new cabaret can be seen in a conversation with The Writer at Victor's Café. The Writer presents Fico with a miniature Statue of Liberty and explains to him, "This pretty lady's torch is Aladdin's lamp, a Latin's lamp. And it will grant any wish in your life," to which Fico responds, "I wish I could relive it." The Writer declares, "You can by rebuilding it." There are two interesting dynamics at work in this exchange. First of all, Fico does not wish to go back to Cuba and continue on with his life there, but rather he desires to relive that previous life. In other words, the experience of exile instills in him a desire to live in the past and not consider any future possibilities. Secondly, The Writer, who is the on-screen embodiment of Cabrera Infante himself, declares that Fico can indeed fulfill his wishes and relive the past by building a New York version of *El Trópico*. This desire to re-create the lost world of Cuba is most prevalent in the exile enclave of Miami. Cuban writer and literary critic Gustavo Pérez Firmat's nostalgic memoir of growing up in Miami explains:

> El exiliado vive de la sustitución, se nutre de lo que le falta. Obligados a abandonar La Habana, nos construimos una copia en Miami. Ante las catástrofes de la historia, el remedio es el remedio. [. . .] Como Don Quijote, todo exiliado es un apóstol de la imaginación, alguien que le da la espalda a la realidad para crearse un mundo nuevo. No en balde el restaurante más popular de La Pequeña Habana es el Versailles, una casa de espejos y espíritus. Cercado de imágenes, rodeado de reflejos, el exiliado no distingue entre el original y el simulacro, entre el oasis y el espejismo.[12] (58)

Through his quixotic imagination, Fico's re-creation of *El Trópico* functions as a copy of his former life in Havana that he cannot

distinguish from the New York version. At the end of the film, the viewer of *The Lost City* does not know if Fico ever realizes that the simulacrum can never truly duplicate the world he left behind, or if he so fully believes the simulacrum that it becomes, in effect, real for him.

The nostalgic vision of Havana presented by Cabrera Infante in *The Lost City* is problematic when one examines with greater attention how time, distance and nostalgia have shifted Cabrera Infante's view of the movement of history. Whereas he once viewed the process of preserving history as multidimensional and complex, as seen in *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*, *The Lost City* offers the viewer a moralistic and unilateral view of these historical events. For example, the presentation of the complexities of the Revolution in the film does well in depicting the excesses of the Batista regime as well as the revolutionary struggles beyond Fidel's *Movimiento 26 de Julio*. However, throughout the film Cabrera Infante's script allows for very little engagement or dialogue with the values and objectives of Fidel's movement. For example, when Ricardo Fellove, the estranged *guerrillero*, arrives at his uncle's funeral, there is no discussion or dialogue with the family, but rather a unidirectional sermon delivered by his father, and a slap in the face from his brother Fico. Ricardo's response is not to try to reconcile these conflicting belief systems, but rather in the Manichean structure presented by Cabrera Infante, the only recourse for this wayward *Fidelista* is suicide.

The other Fellove family member who comes under the spell of Fidel's revolution, and Cabrera Infante's scorn, is Aurora. Although she does not kill herself for realizing the errors of her ways, she is flatly rejected by Fico, who consciously chooses the cruel loneliness of exile over compromising his political ideals in order to continue his relationship with Aurora. In other words, our hero Fico would rather be justified but heartbroken than look for a middle ground and a life of happiness with Aurora. During their meeting in New York City, Fico tells Aurora that returning from exile in order to be able to love her in Cuba would be, "Too big of a price to pay." Fico's exile experience has transformed into a personal crusade to preserve the memory and culture of Havana. He explains to Aurora, "I don't have a loyalty to a lost cause. But I do have a loyalty to a lost city, and that's my cause and my curse." Fico's new cause and curse cannot be compromised by continuing his relationship with a *Fidelista*. Although

he proclaims his eternal love for Aurora, Fico's unilateral solution is for Aurora to join him in exile.

On the other hand, *TTT*, written only a few years after Cabrera Infante's exile, is notably less moralistic with regards to its view of the Revolution. When Arsenio Cué, one of the *tigres*, decides to join Fidel's rebels in the Sierra Maestra, rather than being ostracized from his family, he is merely mocked by his friends for this decision (Swanson 44):

> — Me voy al Sierra.
> — Es muy temprano para la noche y muy tarde para la madrugada. No va a estar abierto.
> — A la Sierra, no al Sierra.
> — ¿A Nicanor del Campo ahora?
> — No, coño, me voy al monte. Me alzo. Me hago guerrillero.
> — ¡Qué!
> — Que me uno a Fiel, a Fidel.
> — Estás borracho hermano. (Cabrera Infante *TTT* 347)

Whereas in *TTT* a decision to join the rebels is rejected by means of humor and *choteo*, in *The Lost City* there is little humor in the Fellove family's reaction to Ricardo and Aurora's allegiance to Fidel. While in *TTT* Cabrera Infante leaves it up to the reader as to how to interpret Cué's decision, in *The Lost City* there is not any room for interpretation: the actions of Ricardo and Aurora are acts of betrayal that cannot be forgiven. These differing views on the Revolution can be explained by Cabrera Infante's extensive time in exile as well as by the overall serious tone of *The Lost City* in comparison to the light-hearted and humorous *TTT*. Also, unlike Fico's exile experience of wanting to take pieces of Havana with him and to re-create Cuban cabarets on foreign soil, the characters in *TTT* are not facing the imminent threat of exile, even though the reader is aware that the *tigres*' world of late 1950s Havana nightlife is about to end. Furthermore, there is no desire to relive the past or to try to stop the forward progress of history, but rather only a desire to preserve the nocturnal fauna through the written text.

In contrast to the Manichean view of the events of the Cuban Revolution seen in *The Lost City*, Cabrera Infante's 1974 work *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* offers a more problematized and complex

vision of history as well as the role of the reader/viewer in interpreting historical events. The text itself, a series of vignettes describing the sweeping history of Cuba, forces the reader to consider a number of alternative perspectives on the history of the island. As such, the role of the writer/narrator/historian as omniscient, infallible purveyor of truth and information is cast into doubt. Souza explains that the structure of *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* resembles that of a comic strip, and as a result, the reader must play an active role in the construction of meaning, "Individual frames exist as singular entities, but each has more meaning when associated with others—this segmentation is essential to the organization of a comic strip and to Cabrera Infante's text. In both cases, it is left to the reader to establish connections between the separate units and to form a story, to transform the segments into a cohesive whole" (124). In other words, the creation of historical meaning does not lie solely with the narrator, but rather the reader must also participate in this process.

In addition to having a structure that puts the onus of interpretation on the reader, the role of the narrator in *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* also casts doubt on the text's ability to accurately represent the events of history. Alvarez Borland's study of Cabrera Infante and the Cuban literature of exile examines this issue of the problematic narrator in *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*, "[. . .] the voice of the fictional historian in this text embodies a paradoxical stance that challenges the veracity of historical language because it offers no assurance of truth while at the same time it explores aesthetic and philosophical issues of perception and meaning" (30). Whereas the view of the historical events surrounding *The Lost City* presented through the lens of the filmic narrative may consider itself to be an alternative vision to the official discourse of the revolutionary government, in effect it presents itself as reliable and objective. However, years before the creation of *The Lost City*, Cabrera Infante himself questioned if any historical account could be truly objective. Alvarez Borland explains,

> While fiction (in this text represented by either "legend" or "in reality") is not always reliable, history is not entirely objective, because it is a story told from only one of many possible perspectives. History, for Cabrera Infante, is subjective and moldable, and can be used to serve one's own purposes. [. . .] The voice of the anonymous historian,

> however, has no more authority over the facts than other versions and becomes instead a critique of the historical process by telling the perceptive reader that this version, like the others, is only one of the many possible ones that can be offered as true to the reader. (34)

The Lost City's treatment of the events of the Revolution and the ostracism of the two *Fidelista* characters, Ricardo through his suicide and Aurora through Fico's rejection of her love, demonstrate that history for Cabrera Infante is no longer quite so "subjective and moldable" and that, as a result, he no longer offers numerous possible versions of history for the reader and/or viewer to consider. This shift in perspective from history as questionable and multifaceted to uniform and absolute results from the passing of years in exile for Cabrera Infante. Whereas *TTT* and *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* were written in the years immediately following the Revolution, *The Lost City* did not begin to take shape until over 30 years after the triumph of Fidel.[13] Having spent decades in exile in London, Cabrera Infante's view of exile and of the historical events surrounding his exile would naturally change. As with most Cuban exiles, his initial reaction would have been to consider exile a temporary situation with the hope of soon returning to a democratic Cuba. However, as the Castro regime consolidated its position and survived the numerous attempts against it, Cabrera Infante and the Cuban exile came to view exile as a more permanent condition and its retrospective view of the events of the Revolution became more entrenched and absolutist.

In conclusion, as we have seen, music and nostalgia play a critical role in the construction of Cabrera Infante's last work, *The Lost City*. Completed nearly forty years after his exile from Cuba and the creation of *TTT* and *Vista del amenecer en el trópico*, Cabrera Infante's film version of the last days of Havana before the dawn of the Revolution becomes mired in idyllic, nostalgic visions of music and nightlife, a place that can only continue to exist in the collective memory of the exile community. The music of the era functions as both an alternative narrative voice in the film, and as a safe haven for the creation of an idealized *patria* free from the political discussions, family betrayal, or social conflict of the times. Secondly, through his Manichean presentation of the events of the Revolution and its aftermath for the Fellove family, Cabrera Infante demonstrates

his evolution from preservationist of the world of Havana nightlife (*TTT*) and questioner of the absolute truth and veracity of historical accounts (*Vista del amanecer en el trópico*), to a more sharply defined view of history and exile. Having spent more years in exile than in Cuba itself, Cabrera Infante's work reflects the permanence of the exile experience as well as the specific consequences of the Revolution. Nonetheless, this last work in exile clearly demonstrates his dedication to the preservation of a lost time and place, just as Fico does through his declaration, "But I do have a loyalty to a lost city, and that's my cause and my curse."

Notes

1. García states that he originally wanted to name the club *Tropicana*, but because of the difficulties presented by procuring copyright for the use of the name, he decided to change the name to *El Trópico*.

2. With the term *Fidelista*, I am referring to members of Fidel Castro's *Movimiento 26 de Julio*.

3. All direct quotes from García come from *The Making of The Lost City*, DVD special feature, or from the director's commentary DVD feature.

4. For example, the music of renowned Afro-Cuban musician and composer Israel "Cachao" López, the HBO film *For Love or Country: The Arturo Sandoval Story*, in addition to writing original music for *The Lost City*.

5. Lyrics for this song include the refrain, "Cachita, muchacha / Te picó la abeja / Cachita, no llores / Te picó la abeja."

6. Abakuá tradition traces back to the Calabar area of West Africa, near the border of Cameroon and Nigeria. Slaves from this area set up mutual-aid societies, known as Abakuá secret societies, in Havana, Matanzas and Cárdenas. The music of their special ceremonies included several styles of drums, accompanied by a cowbell, sticks, and rattles (Rodríguez 826).

7. Throughout this paper, I will be referring to Cabrera Infante's novel *Tres tristes tigres* with the abbreviation *TTT*.

8. For more on the destabilizing effect of orality in literature, see Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1988) and Carlos Pacheco's *La comarca oral: la ficcionalización de la oralidad cultural en la narrativa latinoamericana contemporánea* (1992).

9. Although Shumway's article specifically analyzes the role of rock 'n' roll sound tracks in nostalgia films, the parallels between the music of Cuba in the late 1950s and the rock 'n' roll music of the films he discusses are apparent.

10. The experience of exile was one of the principle motivating factors for producer/director/actor Andy García in this project. According to García, "As an exile, that profound nostalgia that I think all exiles feel promoted in me a necessity to dig into the country which I came from, historically, culturally, and, specifically, musically."

11. For more on Jameson's discussion of "nostalgia film," see *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991).

12. Although Pérez Firmat's work *El año que viene estamos en Cuba* describes the exile experience of Cubans in Miami during his adolescence in the 1970s, there are numerous parallels between his text and Fico's experiences in New York. One must keep in mind also that, whereas most of Cabrera Infante's exile took place in London as an adult, García grew up in the Cuban communities of South Florida and is a contemporary of Pérez Firmat.

13. Although *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* was not published until 1974, Cabrera Infante had begun writing these vignettes in the early 60s, some of which later became portions of *TTT*.

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Idas y venidas en la España contemporánea: los casos de *Volver*, de Pedro Almodóvar y *Calzados Lola*, de Suso de Toro

Eduardo Barros Grela
California State University Northridge

> [. . .] nadie sabe bien cuánto me tarda el partir. Ya me voy, ya marcho, me digo, y mi corazón se vuelve loco de contento.
> *Calzados Lola*

El cambio de siglo ha dejado claras muestras de nuevos cambios de paradigma. La profetización apocalíptica esgrimida por Francis Fukuyama con respecto al "fin de la historia" plasmó la reformulación teórica que llevaba años mascándose en los ámbitos académicos. Su arriesgada afirmación en torno a la llegada en la época actual al fin de las ideologías y al fin de la historia repercutió claramente en las líneas de teorización del nuevo orden mundial tras los atentados del 11 de septiembre en la ciudad de Nueva York. Así, críticos culturales como Román de la Campa, Ernesto Laclau, Néstor García Canclini o Noam Chomsky hablaron de una fulminación inminente del siglo XXI tras estos ataques como los fundamentos de un nuevo cambio de paradigma epistemológico., Ya Gonzalo Navajas (1996) había anticipado (aunque en el ámbito estético) un inmediato desgaste del paradigma posmoderno, extenuado en su aporía, y en favor de un emergente episteme que llamó "neomoderno" y cuya presencia se plasma a partir de la última década del siglo XX en España (153). Esta esfera de una neomodernidad que convive con la posmodernidad a la vez que la cuestiona es apropiada para desarrollar una nueva conceptualización ontológica en la que se impone la re-significación del sujeto como cúmulo de órganos sin cuerpo, como una desintegración del cuerpo en su forma, "aséptica" e impermeable: la posthumanidad.[1] En este ámbito de la deconstrucción del sujeto desde una conceptualización, más que incorpórea, de una

corporalidad cambiante, resurge la figura del fantasma como propuesta actancial de la identidad reconstruida de ese sujeto.

En este estudio me propongo discutir las formas en las que estas consideraciones teóricas se articulan en el ámbito de la textualidad literaria y fílmica en España, en particular a través del análisis de la novela de *Calzados Lola* (1998) de Suso de Toro, y de *Volver*, la producción fílmica que Pedro Almodóvar termina en 2006. Ambas obras exploran la nostalgia como fundamento actancial de la identidad individual y colectiva, desde la discusión de la herencia cultural proyectada a través de la herencia familiar (y, en particular, de la madre), así como de la vuelta al ámbito rural como alternativa a la paralización de la urbanidad posmoderna, sin dejar de atender a la contradicción derivada de la búsqueda de un pasado que conlleva, irremisiblemente, la re-escritura de ese pasado. El objetivo de este regreso se presenta, así, como la creación de nuevas espacialidades que deconstruyan las estructuras categóricas de las anteriores formas de entender el espacio cultural en España (la tan afamada separación entre lo rural y lo urbano). Es así como en estas dos obras se presentan personajes de cuya corporalidad tangible no hay constancia ("Es como si estuviera muerto. ¡Soy un fantasma!" [Toro 220]), lo que sirve a los textos para expresar la preocupación teórica acerca de las nuevas formas de humanidad regeneradas a partir de otros modelos más tradicionales de existencia. Es de particular interés que ambos autores hagan uso de figuras fantasmales para formular sus posturas hacia lo posthumano, ya que estas figuras implican siempre una reconceptualización del pasado y, mediante la invitación a entender a todos los personajes como fantasmas, una reconceptualización también del propio sujeto. Estas dos obras permitirán, por lo tanto, explorar detalladamente las "idas y venidas" de la identidad subjetiva colectiva en la España contemporánea a través de la movilización física como forma de creación de nuevas espacialidades, así como de la movilización "metafísica" como articulación de los nuevos paradigmas posthumanos que cuestionan la integridad del cuerpo. Esta exploración tendrá una plasmación teórica a partir de los supuestos planteados por Guattari en torno a la importancia de la nostalgia para la creación de una "disutopía" fundamentada en el redescubrimiento del pasado como cuestionamiento del presente y, siguiendo esa línea, la aportación de Baudrillard a la preocupación acerca de la búsqueda obsesiva del origen.

Calzados Lola tiene como protagonista a Manuel, un emigrante gallego en Madrid cuyas aspiraciones se reducen a escalar socialmente por medio de sus contactos en el mundo laboral de dudosa reputación al que pertenece, entre cuyas funciones está la del espionaje a través de escuchas telefónicas. En una de estas escuchas, Manuel recoge información comprometedora para su propio jefe y procede a hacerle entrega de la grabación. Sin embargo, segundos antes de hacerlo, recibe una llamada por telefonía móvil, entrecortada y sin apenas recepción, que le informa de la inminente muerte de su madre en Galicia. Manuel abandona precipitadamente Madrid, sin haber llegado a hacer entrega de la grabación, lo que provoca un proceso de regreso a su tierra natal teñido por una trama de persecuciones, amores y asesinatos. En ese viaje, en el que Manuel importa elementos urbanos al ámbito rural y viceversa, el protagonista se enfrentará a una identidad definida por la constante ida y venida, tanto interior como exterior.

En una dinamicidad similar, podemos observar cómo las protagonistas de *Volver* emprenden un camino hacia el ámbito rural (tanto físico como imaginado). Tres mujeres viven la clásica dinámica migratoria del campo hacia la ciudad, con continuas visitas de regreso al pueblo, pero cada vez más espaciadas temporalmente. Sin embargo, los trágicos acontecimientos sucedidos a raíz de diferentes fallecimientos y la consecuente presencia de figuras fantasmales hacen que esa relación con el ámbito rural se plasme en una presencia mucho mayor de éste, y que las mujeres protagonistas inviertan el movimiento migratorio para convertir la alternativa rural en una opción plausible para todas ellas, tanto mediante una presencia mayor suya en el campo como con una incorporación de éste a su "identidad urbana."

Este camino de regreso parece cuestionar las afirmaciones de Nathan Richardson (2002) acerca del presunto abandono de la narrativa (literaria y fílmica) española de los espacios rurales que habían sido tan importantes unos años antes. Richardson sostiene que la salvedad a ese abandono son las letras de las 'comunidades periféricas,' que sí se ocupan del ámbito rural (233). El camino que emprende Almodóvar primero con *La mala educación* y, sobre todo, con *Volver* hacia un espacio rural pueden dar un giro interesante al estudio propuesto por Richardson, quien acierta al afirmar la tendencia estética de las literaturas (y del cine) vasca y gallega a generar ambientaciones que tengan como protagonista a ese espacio de pueblo/aldea donde

se halla una confrontación—desde el pasado—del presente con sus personajes. *Calzados Lola* es, de esta forma, un 'volver' mediatizado por la idea original del "partir," en un movimiento que cuestiona la herencia cultural del franquismo tardío en la producción de identidad de la subjetividad del gallego.[2]

Otra de las acertadas conclusiones alcanzadas por Richardson (2001) afirma que el uso de la tecnología en la obra de Suso de Toro invita a encontrarse con nuevas formas en las que la identidad de los personajes queda supeditada a la actuación de estos dispositivos ajenos a la condición humana (teléfonos móviles, aparatos de escucha, tratamiento de imagen, etc). Es posible que la presencia de la tecnología vaya incluso más allá y se utilice como instrumento de conexión con las formas espectrales que aparecen en *Calzados Lola*, como puente de enlace entre lo propiamente inhumano y la redistribución físico-orgánica de lo post-humano. No es necesario recordar la relevante presencia de esa misma tecnología en muchas de las propuestas fílmicas de Almodóvar, con la que el director manchego problematiza la producción de identidades a partir de representaciones de la identidad individual.

En el caso de *Volver*, tanto la comunicación telefónica como la presencia televisiva juegan un importante papel en la confusión que pretende definir a los principales personajes, ya que introducen elementos tecnológicos en el cuerpo rural (es el caso de los teléfonos móviles cuyo uso se exagera de forma grotesca en la casa rural), o insertan personajes pueblerinos en el corazón de la tecnología en su vertiente más antisublime (un "reality show" de la televisión). Esa tecnología tiene un papel protagonista en la articulación del movimiento que define las características de la nueva espacialidad entre lo rural y lo urbano, representada por personajes pertenecientes al ámbito rural tradicional que se mueven con suma facilidad ante las antaño inaccesibles innovaciones tecnológicas.

Calzados Lola puede ser entendida como una 'novela negra rural,' en lo que parece ser un claro oxímoron en referencia a la naturaleza misma del concepto de novela negra tal y como la describe Raymond Chandler, al afirmar que "la novela negra es la novela del mundo profesional del crimen."[3] Esta definición del autor norteamericano se asocia directamente con el ámbito urbano, y se enfoca en la desilusión de una vida urbana definida por la alienación de los valores "culturalmente heredados," y en respuesta al deslizamiento de sus significantes

culturales. La novela negra norteamericana, como se sabe, ha tenido una gran influencia en la narrativa española de los años 80 y 90, y en el caso de *Calzados* Lola da un paso más para adentrarse en la espacialidad del viaje (de regreso) a la "profundidad" peninsular, al ámbito rural en su expresión más opuesta al clásico entorno urbano de la novela negra. El viaje de retorno a un pasado caduco, inexistente—un tema que también se ha observado en obras anteriores de Almodóvar (*La mala educación* o *Átame*, por ejemplo)—sirve para legitimar las acciones de sus protagonistas, que *actualizan* ese pasado en favor de una redefinición de su presente. En *Volver*, que es definida en varios medios[4] como un homenaje a La Mancha, Almodóvar plantea de forma más explícita la cualidad fantasmagórica de esa plasmación histórica que representa la figura de la madre, recipiente de la herencia cultural de una identidad carente de referentes fijos en una situación sociopolítica e histórica que invita a la fluctuación de esas identidades. La presencia de elementos fantasmales también se plasma en *Calzados Lola*, cuya articulación de dimensiones adyacentes a la realidad conocida persigue objetivos que cuestionan las espacialidades tal y como las entienden los protagonistas.

Los personajes de estas obras se hallan a sí mismos en situaciones comprometidas (homicidios, secuestros, negocios de sospechosa legalidad, etc.) cuya responsabilidad ceden a un entorno urbano que funciona como delimitador de las [re-escritas] libertades de sus orígenes pre-postmodernos, unas libertades de actuación que la nostalgia les permite fabricar. En ese entorno apático de la gran ciudad, los personajes de *Volver* y de *Calzados Lola* se encuentran hastiados por la cosificación de sus rutinas, entregados a un devenir aletargado, y alienados de su "identidad de origen." Sin embargo, lejos de establecer un binarismo entre el ámbito rural y el ámbito urbano, ambos textos proponen una confluencia de *espacialidades* que ruralizan el entorno urbano y urbanizan el entorno rural, en una suerte de articulación local de las formas en las que los espacios públicos adquieren significación a través de las prácticas de la vida diaria de quienes usan esos espacios.[5]

Volver, rodada por Pedro Almodóvar en 2006, relata las historias de madres e hijas de dos familias vecinas que se han visto unidas de diversas maneras a lo largo de su historia. Por un lado, Raimunda (Penélope Cruz), ante la reciente muerte de su madre, mantiene una relación muy estrecha con su hija y con su hermana, relación que les

ha permitido superar su importante pérdida familiar. Paralela a la historia de Raimunda, se presenta la vida de Agustina (Blanca Portillo), cuya madre también "desapareció" el mismo día en que murió la madre de Raimunda. La historia da un giro inesperado (y sorprendente, si se tiene en cuenta la anterior producción fílmica del director) cuando la madre muerta se le aparece a una de las hijas y comienza a llevar una vida "normal" al lado de éstas. La duda acerca de si esta aparición es un fantasma o no nunca llega a resolverse completamente para los personajes, lo cual le confiere una identidad difusa, incompleta. Desde el principio de la historia, el espectador se enfrenta a un ambiente fantasmagórico que presagia el devenir de los acontecimientos. Las cuatro protagonistas "vivas" se encuentran en un cementerio repleto de mujeres que, bajo una fuerte ventisca, sacan brillo con autómata tenacidad a las tumbas de sus seres queridos (masculinos) fallecidos. Esa pequeña necrópolis no se halla en el espacio habitual de Raimunda y su familia urbana, sino en el ámbito rural al que pertenecía su recientemente fenecida madre. Sin embargo, la ambientación propia de esa urbanidad que les es natural a las protagonistas, se aleja de la representación moderna de la ciudad para habilitar un espacio que integra las costumbres importadas del pueblo en la configuración heterogénea y voluble propia de las espacialidades posmodernas.

Esta integración molecular de las identidades espaciales de las protagonistas obedece a una dinámica deconstructiva de las esferas tradicionales de la modernidad. A lo largo del texto fílmico, no sorprende al espectador—por su nimiedad—el contraste establecido entre el ámbito rural y el urbano. Las dinámicas que se siguen en uno y otro parecen perpetuarse bajo la superficialidad de un cambio de formato: la rutina inerte que caracteriza las costumbres pueblerinas aparece como transposición del ámbito urbano. Las mujeres limpian con obstinación las lápidas en el cementerio, aun sabiendo que su tarea es pragmáticamente inútil puesto que el viento arrastra tierra que ensucia con mayor tesón lo que ellas acaban de abrillantar. Su actividad muestra la monotonía de una rutina cuya esencia subyace en el propio espacio en el que se realiza: el espacio que es común a todos los pueblos, el cementerio. El aeropuerto, donde trabaja Raimunda también es significante porque fusiona la cotidianeidad posmoderna con lo impersonal y repetido; el aeropuerto es el "no espacio" por excelencia. Como limpiadora de este espacio fantasmagórico y transitorio las identidades se diluyen en tipologías. La propia subjetividad de Raimunda se desvanece en su ámbito

profesional como uno más de los espectros que habitan efímeramente el impersonal espacio de los aeropuertos.

Refiriéndose a la situación de la clase trabajadora, Felix Guattari y Antonio Negri exponen que "el resentimiento, la repetición vacía, y el sectarismo constituyen las modalidades en las cuales se viven las esperanzas traicionadas" (73). Guattari conceptualiza el proceder de la nostalgia como forma de transgresión de las rutinas establecidas mediante la articulación de lo que él llama el *futuro anterior*—un futuro predeterminado—y que relaciona directamente con su formulación de la "disutopía" (79). Los personajes de *Volver* se adhieren a ese futuro predeterminado e insoslayablemente condicionado, por sus respectivos pasados fantasmales que no sólo definen su herencia cultural anterior, sino que se redefinen a sí mismos en un presente restringido por el solape de una epistemología determinada por el silencio.

A lo largo de la película, el espectador puede observar que la consigna es "callar," en un acuerdo tácito entre los personajes para que haya sucesos que se olviden, que pasen a formar parte del rumor, del silencio, del viento solano de la locura. Aquel silencio pretérito como eliminación de voces se reconceptualiza en estas obras como discurso "callado" que otorga actancialidad a quienes lo profesan. Este mismo silenciamiento se ejerce en el ámbito urbano en el que Raimunda desarrolla su actividad diaria, ya que la protagonista no vacilará a la hora de ocultar la muerte de su pareja para salvaguardar la integridad de su hija. A pesar de la complicidad existente entre todas las figuras femeninas de la historia, no cabe duda de que el silencio, el secreto aceptado, la herencia del rumor del viento del pueblo forma parte importante de sus identidades.

Siguiendo con los planteamientos propuestos por Guattari (Cap. VI "Pensar y vivir de otro modo: propuestas" [1999]), podemos afirmar que se produce una vuelta a las raíces humanas, una búsqueda del retorno a los orígenes de la esperanza: "[la búsqueda de] un 'ser para,' de una intencionalidad colectiva orientada al hacer más que a un 'ser contra' estancado en las salmodias impotentes del resentimiento" (77). La aceptación de ese silencio se transforma en la propuesta de Almodóvar en una forma de transgresión desde la que recuperar las nociones de la memoria, del pasado colectivo, pero desde una postura (de)constructiva, más que destructiva, más allá de la fórmula tradicional de la nostalgia como fuente creadora de pasados reconstruidos. El resentimiento, como forma axiológica, se ha establecido en la España de

la Transición y, desde el hartazgo de las sempiternas disputas de sus dos facciones, se hace necesario un "pensar, vivir, experimentar y combatir de otro modo" (Guattari y Negri 79).

Se puede afirmar, por lo tanto, que la obra de Almodóvar gira en torno a un discurso de integración de lo urbano con lo rural con el fin de obtener una forma de conocimiento no estancada en los valores fijos y tradicionales del contrapunto ideológico. La articulación de este nuevo discurso propone una construcción continua de la realidad contemporánea, en la que haya espacio para las diferentes voces, así como para la ausencia de las mismas. El silencio y el rumor aparecen como discursos legítimos que albergan tanta carga semántica como las voces que los interrumpen. En esta esfera tibia de las fragmentadas fronteras entre ambas espacialidades se halla la figura fantasmal de Irene (Carmen Maura), personaje que ha fallecido en uno de los múltiples incendios que determinan la idiosincrasia del pueblo natal de las protagonistas, aunque, evidentemente, el desarrollo posterior de la trama descubrirá que esta muerte no había sido tal. Esta entidad fantasmagórica funciona como símbolo equívoco de la espacialidad fronteriza que determina los nuevos paradigmas epistemológicos de una sociedad determinada por la reincorporación silenciosa de elementos fundacionales del pasado a una reescritura perpetua de esa identidad "neomoderna." Tanto los personajes que rodean a la figura de Irene como los propios espectadores se asientan en un estado de duda ante la presencia de la madre de Raimunda. Su aparición se corresponde con la definición de ese viento solano que causa tantos trastornos a los habitantes de su pueblo de origen. No obstante, el estado de incertidumbre que caracteriza a la presencia de este personaje no es exclusivo del ámbito rural, sino que acompaña a los personajes hasta el espacio de la gran ciudad, Madrid.

Es significativo que el espacio escogido para el desarrollo de la historia en el ambiente urbano sea el de las afueras de Madrid (Vallecas, Tetuán), en particular el de barrios que han sido poblados por personas que llegan a Madrid desde distintos puntos de la geografía española, y que reconstruyen ese espacio urbano bajo las condiciones rurales de sus diversos orígenes. Cabe notar en este apartado la relevancia de las concomitancias demográficas con otros espacios cuya identidad ha estado determinada por los movimientos migratorios. Mike Davis hace referencia en su *Magical Urbanism* (2001) al hecho de cómo la diversidad que define a los diferentes pueblos que emigran hacia un

punto determinado termina por desaparecer en una amalgama que da lugar a la otredad establecida por el cuerpo social receptor y dominante. En *Volver*, podemos observar ese proceso por medio de los diferentes personajes que conforman la taxonomía del barrio, un espacio proclive a permitir actuaciones de *in-betweenness* como actitud efectiva de creación de nuevas identidades. Por este motivo, el barrio se hace idílico para la presencia de un ser ilusorio que es la máxima representación de esa figura de frontera, de esa subjetividad difusa cuya identidad es el paradigma del "no pertenecer a ningún sitio."[6]

No obstante, la realidad contemporánea de barrios como estos en la España de la inmigración daría pie a posicionarse en favor de la incorporación de personajes que configurasen ese nuevo estado social del urbanismo madrileño. ¿Por qué se decanta Almodóvar por un personaje de las raíces de la España más tradicional? Según Jo Labanyi (2002),

> It is often said that, with the exception of its Galician "Celtic fringe," Spain has no tradition of ghost stories. [. . .] I should like here to draw on Derrida's historical-materialist reading of ghosts in *Specters of Marx* (1994) in order to argue that the whole of modern Spanish culture—its study and its practice—can be read as one big ghost story. (1)

La lectura de Derrida que Labanyi aplica a la historiografía española se entiende desde la definición propuesta para el concepto de "fantasma." Según Derrida (1994), los fantasmas son los rastros de aquellos a quienes no se les permitió dejar un rastro: víctimas de la historia, grupos subalternos, etc. Labanyi explica que, siguiendo esa línea de pensamiento, la posmodernidad estaría caracterizada por el reconocimiento de esos fantasmas creados por la modernidad. El personaje de Irene parece cumplir con las caracterizaciones que se hacen de la entidad fantasmal: su actuación vital ha estado eminentemente condicionada por una subyugación a un sistema patriarcal que la ha silenciado, y su última marginalización, la que la legitima como forma subalterna, parece revertir los valores sociales tradicionales de la España descrita en *Volver*. Más adelante discutiré con más detalle la resignificación de lo subalterno en el discurso cinematográfico, pero quisiera insistir en la problematización de una formulación de estos personajes como partes integrantes del discurso fantasmal que

define la historia presentada en la película. Si para Labanyi la cultura moderna española puede ser interpretada como una gran historia de fantasmas, de la misma forma, la articulación discursiva de *Volver* se puede leer como un homenaje a esas figuras sin voz que han teñido de silencio la historia reciente de España.

Gran parte de los personajes principales presentan rasgos típicos de la discordancia existencial causada por el viento que se anuncia en la escena inicial de la película. Ese viento, ese rumor, ese dador de caos que es el solano cálido y sofocante interviene en la trama a modo de recurrencia de una sinrazón (de forma paralela a como se presentará el sonido (mental) del mar en el protagonista de *Calzados Lola*). Esa apelación a la locura transitoria como "normalidad" vigente en la vida del pueblo sirve para situar el tono discursivo del relato en un estado de subalternidad legitimada. Si Raimunda se caracteriza por su pragmatismo y por el predominio de la razón en su posición frente al mundo, en el momento en el que ha de enfrentarse a un suceso que rompe su característica monotonía (el asesinato de Paco [Antonio de la Torre] por parte de su hija ante el intento de violación por parte de aquél), Raimunda procede con plena normalidad en su actuación como sujeto delictivo. El rumor del viento solano legitima su identificación con la normalidad del acto criminal perpetrado por ella y por su hija Paula (Yohana Cobo), cuya rutina tampoco parece profundamente afectada por el acto cometido. En el caso de Sole (Lola Dueñas), sorprende la meticulosidad con la que incorpora la presencia de su madre a su rutina diaria, acordando soluciones inverosímiles para justificar la anexión de la última a la vida de la primera, independientemente de su condición como ente natural o sobrenatural. Es de especial interés la conversación que Sole mantiene con su madre con respecto a cuál ha de ser la identidad que ésta adquiera para no levantar sospechas entre la clientela de su improvisada peluquería doméstica. En esa conversación, además de servir como antecedente de lo que será una de las referencias más claras al silenciamiento del 'otro,' se ponen de manifiesto las tendencias inertes a producir una identidad generalizada y estereotipada de lo subalterno cuando ambas mujeres hablan de adoptar una identidad de mujer indigente china, rusa o de otras nacionalidades. Algo similar sucede con la reacción de Agustina ante la posibilidad factual de estar tratando con un fantasma: se incorpora esa contingencia a la violenta comprensión del día a día.

En todos estos personajes hay una clara aceptación de esa anomalía, aceptación que viene determinada por la propia condición fantasmagórica de todos ellos. Raimunda aparece en repetidas ocasiones limpiando: en su trabajo en el aeropuerto; en el cementerio; tras la muerte de su pareja, en el restaurante, etc. Esa obsesión (y necesidad) de limpiarse de máculas es referencial a una existencia fantasmal fundamentada en la ficción de su creación nuclear familiar; en apariencia responde a los cánones establecidos, pero en su interior es sabedora de que su pareja no es el padre natural de su hija y que ella misma, Raimunda, dio a luz a su hija como consecuencia de las sucesivas violaciones por parte de su padre. Esa ficción como máscara de culpabilidades es transmitida a Paula, cuya sombría participación en la trama se ve acusada en el momento en el que descubre que la posición familiar que había definido su identidad ha quedado destruida, primero por la eliminación física de la figura paternal que ella misma ejecuta y, después, por la eliminación existencial del concepto de "padre," precipitada por el conocimiento de una verdad ulterior con respecto a su progenie. Sole y Agustina viven aletargadas, una tras su experiencia matrimonial y, en cierta medida, resignada a un devenir que ya no tiene mucho que ofrecerle, y la otra atada a ensoñaciones que la liberen del yugo geográfico que es—en su caso, obligado—el pueblo.

El hecho de que un fantasma "explícito" aparezca en las vidas de estos personajes no sólo no es causa de pavor entre ellos, sino que les sirve como alivio a sus soledades sociales y existenciales, dando sentido a una lucha que parecía carecer de objetivos. Esa lucha se puede entender a la luz de lo que dice Baudrillard (1984) para ahondar en la repercusión de la inercia en la disposición del ser humano ante el universo:

> A lo más verdadero que lo verdadero opondremos lo más falso que lo falso. No enfrentaremos lo bello y lo feo, buscaremos lo más feo que lo feo: *lo monstruoso*. No enfrentaremos lo visible a lo oculto, buscaremos lo más oculto que lo oculto: *el secreto*. No buscaremos el cambio ni enfrentaremos lo fijo y lo móvil, buscaremos lo más móvil que lo móvil: *la metamorfosis*. No diferenciaremos lo verdadero de lo falso, buscaremos lo más falso que lo falso: *la ilusión y la apariencia*. (6) (el énfasis es mío).

Así, las mujeres que conforman el núcleo actancial principal de este texto fílmico hacen uso de su mirada para retornar a un espacio cognitivo que les permita destruir la inercia establecida en sus actuaciones diarias. Sin embargo, la violencia de un discurso hegemónico que invita inexorablemente al letargo hace que la única forma que hallen de enfrentarse a ese discurso sea mediante una apropiación del mismo, buscando y legitimando lo más feo que lo feo—*el asesinato*; lo más oculto que lo oculto—*los silencios*; lo más móvil que lo móvil—*la metamorfosis del espacio*; y lo más falso que lo falso—*los fantasmas*. De esta forma, y ante los episodios traumáticos que viven, tanto los personajes de *Calzados Lola* como los de *Volver* aceptan el reto de ficcionalizar su percepción, afirmando así la condición fantasmagórica de su entorno y de sí mismos. El entorno que habrán de manejar se definirá por la aceptación de la realidad en la propia ilusión (Fiennes 3'45"–4'47"), por la búsqueda de lo verdadero en lo más falso que lo falso.

El caso más representativo de esta ficcionalización es el de Irene, quien ante los sucesivos y violentos descubrimientos que determinan su realidad, decide adoptar una identidad de realidad desde la ilusión.[7] Esta estrategia aparece representada en el texto fílmico a través del rumor del viento, cuya manifestación inicial en el discurso narrativo perdura hasta el final de la película por medio de una presencia fantasmagórica; por medio del rumor.[8] En continua analogía con el personaje de Irene, del que los demás personajes no son plenamente capaces de afirmar su presencia aunque ésta les conste empíricamente, el rumor del viento, su sombra y su rastro determinan las acciones de esos mismos personajes.[9] La realidad de los efectos frenopáticos del viento a través de la ilusión de su rumor funciona como detonante de las acciones de los personajes protagonistas en busca de una deconstrucción de la axiología dominante. Esta deconstrucción es una herramienta de recuperación, de resignificación y de legitimación de los discursos subalternos que habían sido marginados por la sublimación del totalitarismo en la historia contemporánea de España, aun insistiendo en incorporarlos desde su realidad, perteneciente a la ilusión e inseparable de ella. Tal y como afirma Avery Gordon, "[. . .] finding the shape described by absence captures perfectly the paradox of tracking through time and across all those forces that which makes its mark by being there and not there at the same time" (6). El viento funciona como ese rumor fantasmal, cuya presencia es una ausencia, y cuyas huellas infieren una duda a la realidad de su existencia. Del

mismo modo en que Almodóvar dota a sus personajes de un halo fantasmagórico para reconstruir el sistema de valores establecido en la sociedad española de principios del siglo XXI, Suso Toro había utilizado en 1999 técnicas semejantes a la hora de construir un discurso de generación de espacios que se convertiría en su novela *Calzados Lola*. Uno de los mayores logros del texto fílmico propuesto por Almodóvar radica en afirmar la condición subalterna de sus personajes como parodia de la idiosincrasia de los grupos dominantes. En la propuesta novelística de Toro, podemos ver un esquema narrativo similar en búsqueda de una problematización paralela del espacio como productor de identidades. Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas indica que, "[. . .] despite its location in the past, the popular appeal of the nostalgia film signals it as an important cultural barometer of the present. [. . .] Cultural and political postmodernity is experienced as a series of disorientating effects producing a sense of loss of individual identity, roots and community" (2000, 119).

Ya hemos visto cómo los personajes femeninos de *Volver* emprenden un camino—físico e imaginario—hacia el ámbito rural. De la misma forma nos hallamos en *Calzados Lola* ante personajes cuyas identidades se definen en espacialidades fronterizas que tienden puentes entre un presente reconceptualizado y un pasado que había sido olvidado, marginado, silenciado. En el monólogo que abre la novela, podemos observar una exigencia de actancialidad por parte de la narradora: insiste en su deseo obsesivo por 'partir,' en lo que es una clara referencia al movimiento migratorio que caracterizó a la sociedad gallega de mediados del siglo XX. Sin embargo, el deseo de partir de la voz hablante no es para dejar su tierra, su espacio, y en búsqueda de un futuro más próspero. La marcha que anuncia es hacia la muerte y, sin embargo, no es una marcha autómata, pasiva. La "voz" que llora esos deseos repite que le da la bienvenida a la muerte, pero que no es esa muerte quien viene a buscarla, sino que es ella, la madre del protagonista, quien se lanza en su busca. De esta aproximación inicial a *Calzados Lola,* igual como sucede en *Volver*, se destacan dos temas importantes: primeramente, la muerte, a través de sus repetidas manifestaciones desde el comienzo de ambas obras; en segundo lugar, la inestabilidad temporal, o alternancia cronológica narrativa. Hay una tendencia a identificar la voz narrativa del protagonista masculino (Manuel) con el presente narrativo, mientras que esas intrusiones sensoriales intercaladas en la narración se entienden

como manifestaciones de un pasado dada su condición póstuma. Cabe mencionar con respecto a esta segunda idea presente en el inicio del texto que el discurso del pasado se ubica, por lo tanto, en Galicia mientras que el del presente parte desde Madrid, y el hecho de que ambas temporalidades se difuminen con la progresión de la narrativa es indicativo del marco espacio-temporal basado en la ambigüedad que se utiliza como ambientación de la historia y que la caracterizará en sus diferentes dimensiones hermenéuticas. La muerte aparece como discurso recurrente en las obras que están siendo analizadas en este ensayo. En *Calzados Lola*, la invitación al lector a ambientar su lectura desde un prisma luctuoso parece destinada a evocar esa melancolía que ha sido descrita como característica del *sujeto* galaico-portugués. Ese sentido de nostalgia (o *morriña*) se caracteriza por un abandono de la subjetividad a la inercia del sentimiento, convirtiéndose éste en un estado de parálisis que se intensifica con el incremento del pensamiento; es ese "dolor del conocimiento" (Toro 8).

La infeliz entrega del Manuel residente en Madrid a una rutina desesperanzada se hace evidente en lo malhumorado de su carácter. Siempre actuando a la defensiva, Manuel se define a sí mismo como una persona pragmática, instalada en el *hic et nunc* y desinteresada de cualquier planificación que entrañe un compromiso: "Mañana es otro día. Mañana quién sabe" (21). Su dedicación profesional no se ve correspondida con un ánimo de prosperar, sino que parece obedecer a una dinámica vital fundamentada en la supervivencia a corto plazo. Según Baudrillard, "[. . .] en un sistema en el que las cosas están cada vez más entregadas al azar, la finalidad se convierte en delirio, y desarrolla unos elementos que saben perfectamente superar su fin hasta invadir la totalidad del sistema" (1983, 10), observación que explica la ausencia de objetivos concretos en el personaje entregado a la inercia de una rutina pero en búsqueda de una identidad. Del mismo modo, Manuel difumina la suya en una búsqueda similar, en lo que parece una aplicación del discurso de Baudrillard: "Histeria inversa a la de las finalidades: la histeria de causalidad, correspondiente a la desaparición simultánea de los orígenes y de las causas: búsqueda obsesiva del origen, de la responsabilidad, de la referencia, intento de agotar los fenómenos incluso en sus causas infinitesimales" (1983, 11). Manuel se encuentra en una situación de parálisis, tanto en su búsqueda como en su aceptación de la rutina, causada por la súbita desaparición de los vínculos con su origen.

Encontramos en el personaje de Manuel claras referencias tanto a la "histeria de las finalidades" como a la "histeria de la causalidad." El desarraigo que muestra por todo lo que se escape de su inmediatez de conocimiento: "No me acordaba de mi casa para nada. Vivía lo que cada nuevo día me ponía delante de un modo automático" (19). Manuel se va transformando a lo largo de la narrativa en un reconocimiento de la ausencia—de la *falta*—de un origen reconocible. El viaje que Manuel emprende hacia Galicia motivado por la muerte de su madre y dejando atrás un Madrid repleto de cabos sueltos ha de entenderse como la inversión de ese desarraigo, que dirige ahora su desdén hacia la monotonía de la vida urbana y que da lugar a una búsqueda referencial de un origen que se ha ido enmoheciendo con la ausencia del personaje. No obstante, el automatismo que Manuel ha ido interiorizando en su desarrollo, tampoco ahora le abandona. Cuando recibe la llamada que le obliga a volver a su pueblo, el espectro que lo liga a su subjetividad urbana se acentúa al perder contacto sensorial con la realidad en la que lleva a cabo su actividad diaria. Incluso el sonido del teléfono parece anticipar un estado fantasmagórico con sus continuas interrupciones y cortes de voz. Manuel va a iniciar su viaje de regreso, su negación del "partir," pero lo va a hacer desde un estado regido por elementos ajenos a su identidad física y que denotan con su presencia una fascinación, una perplejidad, una incertidumbre.

El mejor de los ejemplos para ilustrar este estado espectral es el que corre paralelo al fundamental en *Volver*. Si allí afirmábamos que el rumor del viento solano determinaba los designios de los personajes, en *Calzados Lola* ese elemento fantasmagórico que se halla en un estado fronterizo entre la presencia y la no presencia aparece representado por el rumor del mar: "Aquellos ruidos de mar" (16). De vez en cuando, el Manuel que vive en Madrid se asusta con el rumor marino que, saliendo de la nada, inunda sus oídos. No es una cuestión física, sino psicológica, y Manuel parece no poder controlarla a pesar de lo inquietante que le resulta. La memoria de su identidad olvidada se manifiesta a través de un sonido que refiere a la matriz de su subjetividad, pero ese sonido externo del mar no tiene una existencia física, no se puede concretizar. Sin embargo, es ese sonido el que determina las acciones y las decisiones de Manuel a largo plazo, y es, a su vez, lo que le confiere ese estado espectral que acompaña a la monotonía de su rutina. La familia de Manuel parece estar condicionada por los mismos fantasmas, aunque desde su entorno rural esto se produzca

de una manera mucho más concreta: "Cómo se oye el mar. Parece que haya mar de fondo. Parece como si hablase. Como si dijera algo. Cómo se oye el mar así, con los ojos cerrados, ¿no lo oyes? Es como si se le metiese a uno dentro" (200).

Los golpes de mar psicológicos que acompañan a los principales personajes de la narrativa de Toro tienen efectos inequívocos en la construcción de las realidades que llevan a cabo. Ante esos rumores marítimos, Manuel dice sentirse como si se hallase en una embarcación que oscila con las mareas y con las marejadas: "Aquella clarividencia solo duró un instante, pero fue mareante e insoportable" (21). Esos mismos personajes, acostumbrados a vivir tras una lente que empaña sus visiones, reaccionan de forma violenta ante un despertar de la rutina, por efímero que éste sea. Tanto Manuel como su hermano Miguel han cultivado una impostura existencial ante el desgaste ontológico al que estaban condenados, cuyo exceso de inercia hacia el progreso conlleva una paralización retrógrada en su desarrollo. Reflexionando sobre el papel de la inercia en la conducta del individuo, explica Baudrillard que, "[La solución puede estar en . . .] una desaceleración que permitiría reingresar en la historia, en lo real, en lo social, como un satélite extraviado en el hiperespacio regresaría a la atmósfera terrestre" (37).

Siguiendo esta línea, se puede observar cómo los personajes de *Calzados Lola* y de *Volver* se frenan, vuelven sus miradas, y siguen en sentido inverso los pasos que en el pasado les hicieron partir entre secretos, silencios y voces inventadas. Proponen una deceleración de la inercia alienante moderna que reconcilie los elementos característicos de la urbanidad más cosmopolita con los rasgos fundamentales del ámbito rural y local, y buscan lograr así una espacialidad propia y en continua reconstrucción que permita formular un presente aglutinante de la memoria que ha dado lugar a sus subjetividades.

La presencia de lo fantasmagórico en ambas obras implica la necesidad de actualizar de manera concreta las voces marginales que la historia reciente del país determinó como *non gratas*. El hecho de que en ambas familias haya secretos inefables que pertenecen al ámbito de lo prohibido, del tabú, y que en estas narrativas se incorporen al discurso dominante sin perder su condición intrínseca, indica un posicionamiento epistemológico en el que se deconstruyen los discursos hegemónicos y se propone una constante reconstrucción de las subjetividades que logre superar la ausencia de esos rastros como parte de la identidad de un grupo cultural. Dice el hermano de Manuel: "Yo

no existo para él. [. . .] Sentí como si yo no fuese de vuestra familia. No sé de quién soy" (Toro 217).

Cabe recordar que en *Calzados Lola* se sugiere que, a través de las tecnologías, los muertos pueden comunicarse con los vivos y los ausentes con los presentes; Miguel, el hermano del protagonista, está convencido de que se comunica con su madre muerta a través de un vídeo, y el propio Manuel muestra sus dudas con respecto a la existencia de un ser que se identifique como su madre. La historia, tanto familiar como nacional, y la melancolía se entrelazan en ambas narrativas para formar una voz discordante ante los valores tradicionales que se han desarrollado a partir de estos conceptos, y las voces transformadas en rumores fantasmagóricos problematizan su propia existencia y, con ella, la de los personajes mismos como sujetos.

Esa tradición embarcada en el pasado como referente histórico, así como sus repercusiones en el presente, encuentra parangón en lo que afirma Sloterdijk con respecto a que el siglo XX heredó del XIX una paradoja desmoralizadora: un irremisible hastío vital causado por un historicismo sublimado. El hombre histórico se siente abrumado por el "eterno ruido de la época histórica," que le hace despertarse de ella y hacer de la "historicidad" un concepto deprimente (Sloterdijk 112). Este "eterno ruido de la época histórica" se ve desarrollado en las narrativas de la España contemporánea, que continúan indagando en las alternativas epistemológicas y axiológicas de la actualidad nacional. El esquema binario que ha caracterizado las posiciones oficiales de la maquinaria social española en cuanto a la necesidad o al inconveniente de una recuperación de la memoria histórica muestra claros síntomas de desgaste, e invita a reformular una estética que dé pie a vías alternativas de conocimiento. Tanto de Toro como Almodóvar aciertan al expresar una propuesta lúdica que cuestione esos binarismos tradicionales, y que incorpore a los sectores subalternos a la reconstrucción del presente y a la reconceptualización de las espacialidades emergentes en una sociedad que necesita una profunda reorganización de sus valores. En *Volver* y en *Calzados Lola,* la historia, como una de la herramientas para esa reconstrucción, se incorpora a la discusión, y problematiza los silencios que se han facilitado desde su entorno.

Podemos entender, por lo tanto, que en los dos casos de las obras que han sido estudiadas en este ensayo se intenta contestar—desde varios enfoques—a una preocupación más amplia que se hace patente en los textos literarios y fílmicos más recientes del entorno

contemporáneo español: la representabilidad de una serie de espacialidades hasta ahora inexistentes que están reconfigurando el panorama epistemológico correspondiente al ámbito del actual Estado Español. Esos diversos enfoques coinciden en *Calzados Lola* y en *Volver* al discutir la creación de un espacio diferente que articula urbanidad y ruralismo como propia forma de identidad. Al mismo tiempo, al tratar la incorporación de seres pertenecientes al mundo de lo fantasmagórico a la cotidianeidad del mundo de los vivos, ambos autores abarcan terrenos de reescritura de identidades que cuestionan los límites tradicionales de actuación de subjetividades, y los articulan con la celebración de una impostura ontológica en continua fluctuación como nuevo paradigma de la identidad de los pueblos españoles.

Notas

1. Para una discusión más detenida de lo "posthumano," ver Badmington, Neil. Ed. *Posthumanism.* Nueva York: Palgrave, 2000.

2. Particularmente visible en los movimientos migratorios de la década de los 60.

3. Chandler, Raymond. *The Simple Art of Murder.* Nueva York: Vintage, 1988.

4. Pedro Almodóvar regresa con 'Volver,' una comedia en la que mira a la muerte 'con naturalidad.' *Diario El Mundo* 14/03/2006

5. En concordancia con las propuestas de De Certeau en su *The Practice of Everyday Life.*

6. Con esta cita hago referencia directa a la obra *Dreaming in Cuban* (1992), de la escritora latina Cristina García. En ella, uno de los personajes que funcionan como representación de la identidad fronteriza que sistematizó Gloria Anzaldúa en *Borderlands* (1989), indica que "I don't belong anywhere," circunscribiendo así, su propia identidad a una configuración fantasmal que encuentra parangón en el personaje de Irene que está siendo aquí discutido.

7. Pero no el único. Como ya se ha explicado con anterioridad, la presencia fantasmal e ilusoria de los personajes es un rasgo común a todos ellos.

8. Esta continua referencialidad a los vientos que traen consigo la locura (o que, de por sí, son manifestaciones de esa locura) tienen una profunda raigambre popular que ha dado pie a numerosas leyendas con figuras fantasmales como protagonistas.

9. La confusión que inunda al espectador (y a los personajes) ante los objetos propios del 'fantasma' se corresponde con ese estado de estupefacción

paralizante que Žižek discute como forma de afirmación de la autonomía del objeto parcial (Fiennes, 23'43").

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Memory and Fantasy: The Imaginative Reconstruction of a Lost Past in *Las cartas que no llegaron*

Andrea Colvin
University of California, Irvine

Since the end of World War II "Holocaust literature" has generated an intense debate regarding the relationship between historical reality and its representation through fiction. One could even say that representation itself, when faced with the collective trauma of the Holocaust, entered into a profound crisis. As philosophers and thinkers of all kinds struggled to come to terms with the horrors endured by millions in Nazi concentration camps, they began to question the possibilities and limits of representation as well as the problems associated with collective and individual memory. Adorno's well-known dictum, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (34), often serves as a point of departure for this discussion and has provoked different reactions from many, ranging from those who reject any artistic approach to the Holocaust to those who defend fiction as a possible means of overcoming the limits of historical representation.

Although it does not necessarily fall within the category of "Holocaust literature," the autobiographical novel *Las cartas que no llegaron* (2000)[1] by Uruguayan playwright and novelist Mauricio Rosencof can be read within the context of this debate. Rosencof is the son of Jewish parents, who emigrated from Poland in the late 1920s hoping to improve their life in Uruguay. In the 1960s, Rosencof became one of the leaders of the National Liberation Army (the so-called "Tupamaros"), an urban guerilla group that was overthrown by the Uruguayan army in 1972, leading to his arrest and subsequent imprisonment during the military dictatorship (1973–1985). In *Las cartas que no llegaron*, Rosencof tells us the story of his life, in which he confronts not only his memories of thirteen years of terror and deprivation, but also an earlier traumatic episode in his family's life—the disappearance of the relatives left behind in Poland, all of whom

were exterminated in Nazi concentration camps. The text is by no means a realistic or mimetic account of his life, but rather joins fact and fiction in such a way that they become inseparable, creating a poetic and imaginative work that enables us to rethink the relationship between history, memory, and fiction. The prominent role given to imagination and fantasy[2] in the novel suggests that facts do not necessarily speak for themselves and that the use of imagination in writing constitutes a way to possibly overcome the difficulties associated with representing traumatic events.

Without a doubt, the Holocaust constituted *the* traumatic event of the twentieth century, and it has frequently been described as an "inexpressible experience" or an event "beyond words," given that it brought forth a degree of evil and horror that was unimaginable before the era of totalitarianism. When Adorno uttered the aforementioned maxim "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," he alluded to this alleged "inexpressibility" which was understood by some theorists and critics as a kind of prohibition against art in general, suggesting that artistic representations of any event labeled as "unspeakable" would somehow constitute an ethical violation. Berel Lang,[3] for example, chose to systematically reject the possibility of artistic representations of the Holocaust, claiming that fiction is deceitful and dangerous because it tends to "twist" historical truth:

> Figurative discourse and the elaboration of figurative space obtrudes the author's voice and a range of imaginative turns and decisions on the literary subject, irrespective of that subject's character and irrespective of—indeed defying—the "facts" of that subject *which might otherwise have spoken for themselves* and which, at the very least, do not depend on the author's voice for their existence. (316, emphasis added)

Lang's idea that facts "speak for themselves" has been severely criticized by other critics and, as I will later argue, is also rejected by Rosencof whose novel makes a strong point with respect to the relationship between facts and reality, stressing that factual evidence is often entirely insufficient if one wants to comprehend a traumatic event. Likewise, in his essay "Unspeakable," Thomas Tresize carefully examines Berel Lang's idea of what constitutes an ethically acceptable representation

of the Holocaust, concluding that his attitude is excessively restrictive. Tresize argues that by focusing "on the ethical flaws of figurative discourse" Lang infers "the moral superiority of what he considers to be non-figurative representations of the Holocaust" (47), creating the impression that "the writer cannot be trusted to make an intelligent and ethically discriminating choice of figure or trope" (50).

One of the definitions of the term "unspeakable" that Tresize offers in the introduction to his essay refers to that which "may not or cannot be uttered or spoken" (39), either "because it lies outside the profane world and its language" or "because speaking it would be a profanation" (39). This seems to be the definition closest to Adorno's original idea that writing poetry after the Holocaust is "barbaric." Rather than making a prohibition against art, Adorno seems to suggest that the concentration camp experience is one that eludes artistic expression, either because there are no words to represent such evil or because the attempt to do so would violate an unwritten ethical code. Since then, a number of theorists have tried to find new angles from which to approach the problem of representation, trying to escape the risk of making absolute claims or moral prescriptions by shifting the focus from the question of *whether* to represent or *what* can be represented to *how* it is possible to talk about events such as the Holocaust within ethical and aesthetical bounds. Some have even begun to criticize the notion of "unspeakability" altogether, pointing out that by describing Auschwitz as "inexpressible" we may run the risk of converting it into a "sublime" experience, giving it an almost positive spin in the process. Giorgio Agamben, for example, though he defines Auschwitz as a unique phenomenon with respect to its magnitude (31), rejects the notion of "inexpressibility," suggesting that such a view risks bestowing an aura of mysticism on the extermination of human lives: "Decir que Auschwitz es 'indecible' o 'incomprensible' equivale a *euphēmeîn*, a adorarle en silencio, como se hace con un dios; es decir, significa, a pesar de las intenciones que puedan tenerse, contribuir a su gloria" (32).

By not offering the reader a strictly mimetic account of his life and instead emphasizing the artistic use of imagination, Rosencof's novel provides one possible answer to the question of how trauma can be represented through fictional writing. In this respect, his ideas are closely related to those expressed by Geoffrey Hartman and Jorge Semprún, two thinkers who share the view that fiction may be a

possible way out of the crisis of representation. Hartman, for example, has argued that realistic representations often fail because they tend to exceed our human capacity to comprehend and conceptualize certain traumatic events (320). In "The Book of the Destruction," he asks whether so-called unrealistic ways of representing may provide a better alternative: "In every realistic depiction of the Shoah, the more it tries to be a raw representation, the more the Why rises up like an unsweet savor. We describe but cannot explain what happened. Could 'unrealistic' depictions, then, alleviate the disparity?" (321).

The same question is asked by Semprún in *La escritura o la vida* where he argues that harshly realistic representations of radical evil risk betraying reality itself by making it seem "unbelievable" ("demasiado increíble" [198]). Thus, for Semprún (as well as for Rosencof) it is never enough to recount the facts. Instead, he insists that the excess of evil which characterizes the concentration camp experience can only be communicated "con un poco de artificio" (141); in other words, by stimulating the audience's imagination and putting reality into perspective in such a way that our mind becomes open to the unimaginable (141). In order to accomplish such a task without distorting historical truth, the artist, then, should ideally "present without representing, [. . .] show without telling" (Carroll 76). Finally, while Hartman speaks of "limits of conceptualization" (referring to our human (in)capacity to *comprehend* traumatic events), Semprún stresses that there are also limits to our ability to *empathize* with other people's suffering. The real issue for him is not "what can be told" but rather how the experience of the Holocaust can be narrated "while stimulating rather than crushing the sensitivity and imagination of one's audience" (77).

This idea of "presenting without representing" put forth by Semprún also lies at the heart of Rosencof's novel in which he aims to relate the traumatic experiences that have shaped his life without resorting to the use of uncompromising realism. When telling the readers about his encounter with terror under the Uruguayan military regime or about his relatives' experience in a Nazi concentration camp, he opts for a blend of "real" and "imagined" memories, which speak powerfully for the importance of imagination in artistic representations of traumatic events.

Las cartas que no llegaron is divided into three parts, each of them constitutes a different angle from which the author attempts to reclaim

a lost past, first by returning to his childhood and employing the voice and perspective of a young boy, and later through a reconstruction of the imaginary conversations he has with his father while being in solitary confinement. Throughout the text, writing and the use of fantasy in particular play a privileged role, given that the narrative constitutes an effort to reconstruct a rather "blurry" image of a past that is only partially accessible through distant and fragmented memories. Fully aware of his own lack of memories, the narrator pleads for more: "¿Y por qué te escribo hoy todo esto, Viejo?[4] No sé. Tal vez para decirte lo que me acuerdo y, más que nada, decirte lo que me acuerdo para que veas lo poco que sé, que quiero saber más, que quiero más memorias" (Rosencof 69). Thus, faced with the insufficiency of his memories, the use of his imagination becomes the only way to fill in the gaps and to "make up" for the emptiness left behind by his relatives' disappearance as well as the absence of human contact during his years in prison.

One must only look at the book's dedication in order to realize that memory plays a special role in this text. *Las cartas que no llegaron* is dedicated to Rosencof's granddaughter, Inés, specifically to her incipient memory, "tu naciente memoria" (7). Hence, the motivation behind the text becomes clear: it is meant to ensure that the family history will not be lost, that memory will be preserved, not simply because remembering those who suffered is an obligation (which is a declaration quite common in Holocaust literature), but also because sharing our family's memories strengthens our sense of who we are. In fact, the call for "more memories" in the citation above (69) and the attempt to reconstruct a lost history can be interpreted as essential steps in a search for identity which, according to Rosencof, is always rooted in our family's past.

In the first part of the novel, entitled "Días de barrio y guerra," the narrator recounts his childhood memories, among which daily life in his parents' house and the Sunday ritual of reading letters from Poland figure most prominently. As the title of the novel indicates, the letters possess a special significance, mainly because one day they stop coming, creating a void that haunts the Rosencof family for years. The most important aspect of the first part of the book is that the narrator, rather than looking back and commenting on the events as an adult, takes on the voice and perspective of a child, a procedure that can also be found in some examples of Holocaust literature (i.e., Binjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments: Memories of a Childhood, 1939–1948* or

The Painted Bird by Jerzy Kosinski). In her book *Trauma Fiction*, Anne Whitehead analyzes Wilkomirski's novel, where a child's point of view is used in order to narrate his experience during World War II. Whitehead focuses her attention on the effects that this technique has on the reader, pointing out that "the limited insight of the child creates a hiatus in the text, which relies on the knowledge or imagination of the reader to fill in the gap and make sense of the narrative" (38).

Rosencof's novel certainly challenges the reader to take on such an active role in order to reconstruct the meaning behind the innocent and naïve voice of the child. Andrea Reiter, another critic interested in the use of the child's perspective in literature dealing with traumatic experiences, suggests that the impact on the reader is especially powerful because the child's outlook tends to change our view on things we thought we understood: "It is the gaze of the child that allows us to see in a new way that which we already know" (84). In addition, the child's lack of experience often grants his/her observations a singular clarity: "In their unprejudiced and uninformed attitude, children not only notice details which escape the adult but interpret them in a way which makes them seem even more horrific" (85). Later in the same essay, Reiter points to the problems associated with memory, specifically early childhood memories which tend to be extremely fragmented and full of gaps (86).

The same problem is evident in Rosencof's text from the very first page. In part one the narrator begins his story by saying: "No puedo precisar con exactitud qué día conocí a mis padres" and then immediately adds: "Pero recuerdo—eso sí—que cuando vi a mamá por primera vez, mamá estaba en el patio" (11). Thus, the tension between remembering and not remembering, knowing and not knowing, is underlined from the start, and this same ambiguity accompanies the text until the very end. By pointing out rather than covering up his insecurity with respect to the accuracy of his memories, the author directs our attention toward the problematic nature of memory, giving more importance to the act of remembering itself than the accuracy of the facts. In this fashion, Rosencof emphasizes that the past can never be recovered "as it was" and that retelling it means converting it into fiction.

The French historian Pierra Nora[5] was also concerned with how past events are retold, and in his famous work *Les lieux de mémoire* he differentiates memory from history, pointing out that, unlike history which is linear and focused on the "progressions and relations

between things," memory "takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects" (9). If we accept this distinction and carry it over to Rosencof's text, we can see that the author's aim is not to offer a precisely reconstructed and linear version of his past (in other words, of history) but rather to create a kind of archive of memories, however simple or fragmented these may be. Indeed, what we find in "Días de barrio y guerra" is a multitude of recollections that are based on concrete objects, such as the radio that brought news from the war, the shoebox in which his mother kept the family pictures or the streetcar that used to pass by the house. The young boy's commentaries on these objects range from the most naïve and infantile to those that provide a glimpse of how much even a child can be aware of the anxiety reigning in his family, which can be seen in his remark about the tram, "los tranvías son una cosa espantosa porque se llevan a la gente y no se sabe dónde" (19).

In addition to the already mentioned objects, the parents' house also occupies a privileged space within the narrator's recollections. According to Nathan Wachtel's essay, "Remember and Never Forget," the home is often given an important role in Holocaust testimonies, where it represents a kind of lost paradise: "In the beginning was a familiar place: a home, a refuge, warm affectionate surroundings. This original space appears in memory as the ideal of all happiness; it is recalled with longing" (112). Though this may be true to a certain extent in Rosencof's novel (for example, the mother is lovingly associated with the patio, and the narrator recalls with nostalgia the times in which the whole family would gather around the kitchen table), the feeling of happiness and unity is overshadowed by the never-ending wait for letters that never came.

In the absence of letters or any written proof of what in fact happened, fantasy takes over, substituting for "reality" and filling the silence with the voices of those who lacked the chance to tell their story. In *Las cartas que no llegaron*, Rosencof invents letters to take the place of those that never came, imagining what might have happened, beginning with the arrival of the Gestapo in the relatives' village to the deportation to Treblinka, a Nazi concentration camp, even imagining a kind of rebellion led by the prisoners in the camp. Through these unsigned letters, inserted into the text in such a way that the distinction between reality and fantasy becomes blurred, Rosencof insists on the value of imagination, especially in the face of

evil. Thus, one of the letters states: "Porque la fantasía, ¿sabes?, es la única cualidad humana que no está sujeta a las miserias de la realidad. Como las cenizas, ¿comprendes? Porque han comenzado a acumularse grandes cantidades de cenizas" (43).

I shall briefly discuss the use of the word "cenizas" ("ashes"), in order to underline its suggestive power. There is no doubt that Rosencof chooses this word carefully with the intention of stimulating the reader's imagination and evoking (disturbing) images in our mind without having to describe anything directly. Used as a type of synecdoche, the word *cenizas* alludes to the horrors of the concentration camp without explicitly talking about them. Choosing this type of figurative speech constitutes not only an aesthetic but also an ethical decision, which places the text once again within the debate about the "inexpressibility" of the Holocaust and provides a suggestion as to how the difficulties of representation can be overcome.

Turning now to the second part of the book, entitled "La carta," we find a temporal leap in the storyline, bringing us face to face with a young man, trapped in a prison cell and desperate for human contact. As in the first part of the book, the reader is forced to take on an active role and use his/her imagination in order to fill in the gaps in the story. For example, the narrator never speaks directly of the fact that he is in prison, mentioning neither the word dictatorship nor torture, and yet, the reader is able to infer all of these things from the relatively few allusions made in the text, especially descriptions of a space where neither light nor water nor anything else necessary to ensure the survival of human life may enter: "pero mi mundo es este, de dos metros por uno, sin luz sin libro sin un rostro sin sol sin agua sin sin" (72). The entire prison experience is summarized quite effectively through the repetition of the word *sin*, suggesting that the experience of solitary confinement is primarily characterized by the absence of things or beings that make life worth living. Faced with loneliness, endless days, and the complete lack of human interaction, the imaginary conversations with his father, which the narrator reconstructs in this part of the book, become not only a way to pass the time but also a seemingly necessary task for survival. They are marked by two central themes: an obsession with his family's past and its connection to the narrator's own identity.

Throughout this section of the novel, Mauricio continually "converses" with his father about the past, trying on the one hand to

imagine his parents' life in Poland before their emigration and on the other hand to reconstruct an obviously crucial moment in his childhood: The day "the letter" arrived, a document presumably containing notification of the relatives' death, though its content is never actually revealed to us. The narrative returns to this moment again and again, implying that the arrival of this letter constituted a turning point in the life of the Rosencof family, stealing their last hope with respect to their relatives' survival. The silence surrounding this only "real" letter in the novel forms a stark contrast with the imagined letters of part one, emphasizing once more the role of imagination in the novel as well as the author's determination not to tell that which may exceed the reader's limits of conceptualization and empathy.

In order to fully understand the obsession with an inaccessible past I will establish a connection between the narrator's attempt to reconstruct the past through memory and to establish an identity that is rooted in family history. As I carefully examine the text it is possible to see that Mauricio appears to have gone through a twofold identity crisis in his life. First of all, it is evident that Mauricio has always felt distanced from the rest of his family. Being the only member of the family to be born in Uruguay, he does not share the same attachment to Poland, for example. In addition, he is more comfortable with Spanish than Yiddish (69) and prefers the Tango over traditional Jewish songs (60). The split in identity is emphasized through the use of two different names: Moishe, the Jewish name he associates with his childhood, and Mauricio, his preferred choice as an adult. The sense of estrangement becomes stronger after the death of his older brother, whom he adored and who served as a kind of "bridge" between Mauricio's world and that of his parents. In response to the loss of her first-born son, their mother distances herself emotionally from Mauricio, producing feelings of inferiority, guilt and separation at the same time.

The second aspect of the crisis has to do with the narrator's experience in prison and points to the idea that an encounter with radical evil tends to threaten even the very core of humanity—our identity. The gravity of the situation becomes apparent when Mauricio describes the first time his father was allowed to visit him after his arrest, an especially memorable moment because his father does not recognize him: "el teniente dijo 'acá está su hijo, tiene diez minutos,' y vos me miraste y lo miraste y dijiste 'él no es mi hijo, ¿dónde está mi hijo?'" (63).

This double identity crisis, then, can be seen as the reason why Mauricio goes in search of his family's roots; it is a quest that will later lead him to Poland in order to explore his origins and to visit the concentration camp in which his relatives died. His fixation with the past implies hope—the desire to find his own lost identity through the act of remembering and coming to know his family history. However, his trip to Treblinka leads him to a conclusion that may surprise us: The camp, which has been converted into a museum, does not bring him any closer to his lost relatives. It seems that the public act of commemoration fails:

> 'Aquí sí', me dije, 'en esta guía encontraré mi nombre,' y afirmé los pies en la tierra maldita bendecida por tantos que la anduvieron, y entré a mirar y leer me-ti-cu-lo-sa-men-te valija por valija, esas donde guardaron brochas, blusas y sandalias [. . .] y te lo juro, Viejo, las miré una por una, una por una, y nada, allí no estaban, allí no estábamos, ni en esa guía, mi viejo, estábamos vos y yo. (110–111)

Mauricio's experience in the museum brings to mind James Young's work on the problem of memorializing the Holocaust. As Anne Whitehead points out, Young has been able to show that "the gathering of fragments is central to the process of Holocaust memorialisation, particularly in Poland" (60). According to Whitehead, Young recognizes a fascination with and even fetishisation of the remaining objects and indicates that Holocaust museums tend to display them as if "the debris of history" could serve as "an encounter with history itself" (52). The problem is that the object's power or ability to signal beyond itself is gravely overestimated:

> For, by themselves, these remnants rise in a macabre dance of memorial ghosts. Armless sleeves, eyeless lenses, headless caps, footless shoes: victims are known only by their absence, by the moment of their destruction. [. . .] For when the memory of a people and its past are reduced to the bits and rags of their belongings, memory of life itself is lost. (Young 132)

For Mauricio, this means that the only thing that can (re)connect him with his past (and help him find himself) are his own personal memories of which he desperately wants more, recognizing their insufficiency and pleading with his father for more knowledge about the past. In the process of searching for family ties, he comes to yet another unforeseen conclusion—the realization that it is his own encounter with terror that helps him identify with his parents' suffering and thus brings him closer to them. This new awareness is apparent in the following paragraph where Mauricio remembers his thoughts the moment in which the fateful letter arrived:

> Y yo estaba ahí, papá, y no estaba. No estaba ni en tus ojos ni en los de mamá. No estaba cuando hablaban en yiddish, bajito, intenso, rápido, entrecortado; no estaba. Era algo que estaba ahí, aislado por ondas de una intensidad que no me llegaban, estaba del lado de afuera, papá, ahí pasaba algo y yo no estaba y estaba ahí. *Ahora sí. Ahora sí, papá. Estoy ahí.* (82, emphasis added)

This discovery leads us to the third part of the novel, "Días sin tiempo," in which the boundaries between reality and imagination begin to dissolve completely as we read about a fantastic reunion between the narrator and his father. The chapter begins with the mention of a mysterious word, uttered by his father in an unknown language, "un idioma insólito, inexistente, alguna lengua muerta" (117), which Mauricio receives through what appears to have been a dream. Though it is never actually pronounced in the text, this word forms the very center of the story, a focal point to which the narrator returns again and again. Admitting that he does not know how to pronounce it, Mauricio nevertheless understands the word's meaning and feels that, for the first time, he and his father share a common language, a language belonging to those who disappeared from this earth long ago. The utterance of this word can be seen as a new beginning: As it is passed down from father to son it renews the bond between them and constitutes at the same time an act of resistance by establishing communication in a place where human contact is not allowed, a place of absolute silence: "En este territorio reina el silencio, infinito, tanto que cuando se apagan las voces exteriores [. . .] uno acá, atento, puede percibir la actividad ruidosa de las arañas" (122).

These are in fact the two main ideas of "Días sin tiempo:" On the one hand there is an emphasis on the need for human communication, particularly under inhumane circumstances, and on the other hand, an affirmation that resistance is made possible through communication and fantasy. The passing down of an enigmatic word from father to son, an expression that only the two of them can understand, can certainly be seen as a form of resistance, especially in a place where words are strictly prohibited: "[. . .] hablar, lo que se dice hablar, con nadie, eso de 'buen día,' 'cómo anda,' 'qué hay de Nuevo,' nada. Las palabras estaban herméticamente prohibidas, para siempre" (162–163). It is not a coincidence, then, that the other two occurrences in which the word is spoken are also moments of defiance. In the first example, Mauricio mutters the word while a soldier is pointing a gun at his head (131), and the second time he secretly communicates it to the prisoner in the neighboring cell, using a type of Morse code that they invented. This second instance is where, without stating the word, its meaning is finally revealed to us. It means: "Moishe, qué hacés ahí parado, sentate, comé" (165). In other words, the mysterious "palabra" is a welcoming gesture, an invitation to share the food and closeness in the family's home (Lespada 100). It is an ordinary gesture made under extraordinary circumstances, and herein lies its significance. Mauricio is comforted knowing that, even though the word might never again be spoken, its existence continues (165), overcoming the barriers put up to prevent human contact and communication. It is possible to see the act of writing this very novel as an extension of the word, a victory of communication over silence, as well as a continuation of the family ties, even as father and son have become separated by death: "Todo esto es muy loco, Viejo. Porque fijate que hoy, para poder contarte lo que te cuento, a vos, que ya no estás o que estás donde esto no me lo oís o tal vez sí, tengo que contarte lo que se ha dado en llamar el entorno, mirá bien, 'entorno,' donde fue oída, por mí, la Palabra" (161).

For Mauricio the word is a messenger of hope and courage, a way to experience intimacy in the midst of suffering and human deprivation. The novel, thus, ends on a positive note, affirming that love and communication cannot be eliminated, no matter what external limitations are imposed on them. Rosencof indicates that in a world of wars and terror, humanity manages to preserve itself through memory and through "the word," in this case by writing letters that

were never sent: his relatives' and his own. Mauricio finally realizes that even defeat can be turned into victory if one has the courage to tell his story: "Fuerza, mi Viejo. Cuando uno cuenta los naufragios es porque no se ahogó" (145).

The author's decision to include photos at the end of the novel, alongside epigraphs from the text, stresses once more the complex relationship between memory and testimony, reality and fiction. It is clear that the photos no longer form part of an exterior "reality" outside of the text but rather constitute an integral part of a novel seeking to stress its own fictitious quality by intertwining "real" and "imagined" events. For Rosencof, our ability to use our imagination serves not only as a way to overcome the limits of our memory, it also becomes a means of survival in times of intolerable solitude, and it can be used as an act of resistance against totalitarian regimes that strive to eliminate any form of human communication.

In conclusion, *Las cartas que no llegaron* can be seen as a text that provides a response to the crisis of representation and the strained relationship between historical reality and fiction. It presents an alternative to strictly mimetic accounts of personal (or collective) trauma by foregrounding the possibilities of fiction and demonstrating that stimulating the reader's imagination (for example, through the use of the child's voice or fantastic encounters) can be as effective, and perhaps even more powerful than offering realistic depictions of torture and suffering. If Rosencof were to debate Berel Lang, he surely would not only reject the idea that "facts can speak for themselves," but also question whether "reality" is about facts at all. His novel suggests that writing a personal history has little to do with reporting "what happened" and much to do with imagining and reconstructing that which is unknown, and which belongs to the realm of hope and fantasy. Rosencof shows that memories, though fragmented and insufficient, are the key to understanding one's past and one's identity, and that, paradoxically, our imagination can be a powerful tool in the struggle to cope with an unimaginably cruel reality. So, if he were asked to respond to Adorno's dictum, Rosencof might just suggest that "after Auschwitz, the use of fantasy has become absolutely indispensable."

Notes

1. The novel was written and published many years after Uruguay's transition to democracy in the mid 1980s.

2. The use of the word "fantasy" may be seen as problematic since it is a term which generates a wide range of interpretations and is used in a variety of fields, including psychoanalysis, literature, and film. However, in this article the words "imagination" and "fantasy" are used interchangeably to refer to things or events which are not based on concrete reality but which exist only in the narrator's imagination. His fantasies help him cope with the absence of human contact as well as his limited memories.

3. Berel Lang is a philosopher who has written numerous works on the interpretation of the Holocaust, including *Writing and the Holocaust*, *Post-Holocaust: Interpretation, Misinterpretation, and the Claims of History*, and *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*.

4. Use of the appellative "Viejo" is not a rare occurrence in countries such as Argentina or Uruguay where young people use it to refer to or address their father. In general, the word does not have a negative connotation.

5. Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* is a multiple volume collaborative project consisting of 132 articles published between 1981 and 1992, a shorter version of which was later translated into English as *Realms of Memory*. He coined the term "sites of memory" which has become widely used in the field of memory studies. Nora's goal was to study the construction of the French past in a manner more appropriate to the postmodern climate of the 1980s, not by focusing only on historically important events and their causes and effects (which is commonly done in linear historical narratives), but rather by turning his attention to what he regards as the most outstanding (physical and symbolical) sites of the French past. These include such divergent entities as museums and monuments, dictionaries, people, and battles.

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"El chuchumbé te he de soplar:" sobre obscenidad, censura y memoria oral en el primer "son de la tierra" novohispano

Elena Deanda Camacho
Vanderbilt University

> La primera virtud de los censores es su obsesión. Los más grandes perseguidores de la literatura erótica, política o anti-clerical siempre han desarrollado un gusto muy particular por el establecimiento de listas.
>
> Emmanuel Pierrot
> *Le bonheur de vivre en enfer*[1]

La paradoja del censor es que documenta con tan minucioso cuidado el objeto de su repulsión que lo salvaguarda en el tiempo. La Inquisición novohispana condenó las canciones populares en el siglo dieciocho en aras de su obscenidad pero gracias a una sistemática persecución capturó en el texto lo fugitivo de la oralidad y les permitió a las generaciones venideras conocer aquello que no debía conocerse. En los archivos inquisitoriales la lírica popular perseguida se encuentra ensamblada en un complejo textual en donde documentos jurídicos y administrativos (denuncias y testimonios, edictos y circulares) se entretejen y gravitan alrededor de breves cancioncillas llamadas sones de la tierra.[2]

En este complejo textual es necesario evidenciar la mediatización del discurso legal en el cual el individuo (funcionario, denunciante o testigo) ha impuesto *a priori* un juicio de valor. Simultáneamente es preciso destacar la naturaleza performativa del objeto e intentar reconstruir las situaciones sociales, políticas o culturales en las cuales se generó y desarrolló. Richard Bauman considera necesaria la contextualización de la performatividad en el análisis del texto folclórico ya que "los materiales de la literatura oral no son sino el registro parcial de un comportamiento humano profundamente situado" (2). El análisis contextual provee así una puerta de acceso a la convergencia de artista, audiencia y escenario.

Al establecer el vínculo entre las coplas y la comunidad de donde proceden me propongo visitar el lugar en el cual obscenos y obscenas adquieren su importancia tanto en los textos que los refieren como en el contexto que habitan. Esto con el fin de verificar si en la persecución de la obscenidad el censor no persiguió la representación sino al obsceno—o la obscena—como fuente de tal representación. Entre las muchas lecturas que puede recibir el conjunto textual de la lírica perseguida novohispana,[3] mi aproximación intenta demostrar que no son los versos o los bailes sino los individuos y sus acciones los verdaderos objetivos de la Inquisición.

La obscenidad existió en el terreno de los signos pero el castigo se aplicó a individuos reales pertenecientes a castas específicas y al bajo estrato social. Si el Santo Oficio persiguió la lírica popular con tanto ahínco fue por ser símbolo de una acción que sucedía en el terreno de lo real; si buscó silenciar la música fue por no poder suprimir la intrusión de la "plebe" en el espacio social novohispano. Y aunque pudo someter a los individuos con la prohibición no acertó a ganar la guerra. La censura fue incitadora y el escándalo que generaron los numerosos procesos inquisitoriales en contra de los "sones de la tierra" hizo que la "plebe" instaurara bajo nuevas máscaras su expresividad estética.

Anteriores a los sones del siglo dieciocho hay musicalidades indígenas y africanas en la Nueva España. La música indígena fue permitida, regulada y patrocinada por las autoridades eclesiásticas.[4] En 1528 Pedro de Gante permitió las fiestas indígenas en el recinto religioso y abrió el camino a la tarea evangelizadora ya que esto facilitaba que los pueblos aceptaran la nueva religión.[5] Las comunidades africanas, por su lado, tuvieron más problemas para expresarse en público.[6] Mientras que las festividades indígenas fueron, casi totalmente, absorbidas por el calendario religioso, las danzas africanas mantuvieron su secularización atrayendo mayor escándalo. El control y el desacato se alternaban, paralelos a la proclamación de edictos prohibitivos se creaban nuevos géneros musicales como los cumbés, paracumbés, zarambeques y zamacuecas.[7]

En el siglo diecisiete surgió una lírica en lengua española en el estilo de *contrafacta*, esto es, con base en un texto o música religiosa. En esta vena se elaboraron versiones obscenas de los Diez Mandamientos (1604) o del Padre Nuestro (1614); versos que, no obstante, parecen ser efecto del quehacer poético clerical.[8] Será hasta

finales del siglo dieciocho que surja una lírica de manufactura popular, anónima y secular que no se base en ningún antecedente musical o textual religioso y que relate accidentes de la vida cotidiana de los estratos sociales más bajos de la población. Este tipo de lírica, además, une las influencias estéticas de las tres razas de la Nueva España: la voluptuosidad de las danzas africanas, los instrumentos, la musicalidad y la base lírica española, así como nahuatlismos y sonoridades indígenas.

Esta lírica nació bajo el sino de la persecución. María Águeda Méndez en *Amores prohibidos: la palabra condenada en el México de los virreyes* reconoce cuarenta y tres sones, entre los cuales, diez parecen haber sido los más perseguidos por la Inquisición: el "Chuchumbé" (1766), el "Animal" (1767), el "Pan de manteca" (1769), la "Cosecha" (1772), el "Pan de jarabe" (1772), el "Sacamandú" (1778), las "Seguidillas" (1784), el "Jarabe gatuno" (1801), el "Torito" (1803) y el "Vals" (1808). No en todas las denuncias hay una trascripción de los sones. El "Chuchumbé" entre todos destaca por ser el primer son prohibido por el Santo Oficio a todo lo largo y ancho de la Nueva España, contando con un conjunto de treinta y nueve coplas y cinco denuncias de 1766 a 1772.[9]

La palabra "chuchumbé," de acuerdo con Humberto Aguirre Tinoco, deriva de la raíz africana "cumbé" que significa ombligo y que dio origen a géneros musicales afromestizos como el paracumbé, el merecumbé y la cumbia (9). En las coplas de 1766 el término parece haber experimentado un deslizamiento semántico y por contigüidad lo que era "ombligo" significó "pene" como atestigua la primera copla: "En la esquina está parado / un fraile de la Merced, / con los hábitos alzados / enseñando el chuchumbé" (294).[10] La imagen de un fraile semidesnudo mostrando su pene en público es ridícula y humorística. El clérigo es un exhibicionista y su acción va en contra de la moral católica que su hábito representa. El estribillo, por su parte, dice: "Que te pongas bien, / que te pongas mal, / el chuchumbé te he de soplar," expresando así la amenaza de una fellatio bien de buena o mala manera (294).

Es el "chuchumbé" de un fraile la imagen introductoria del primer son en la Nueva España. Ese fraile es, además, mercedario por lo que no es fortuito que otro mercedario, el fraile Nicolás Montero, sea el primero en denunciarlo en el puerto de Veracruz el 20 de agosto de 1766, "lastimado del grave daño que causa en esta ciudad

particularmente entre las ahora doncellas" por lo que suplica que "por vía de excomunión se publique edicto prohibitivo [. . .] recogiendo los muchos versos que se han escrito" (292).[11]

El fraile advierte el daño que la diseminación del "Chuchumbé" puede tener en las "ahora doncellas" ya que el son (y el "chuchumbé" mismo) amenazaba la conciencia (y el cuerpo) de las mujeres. La denuncia tiene efecto: el 26 de agosto los inquisidores piden al fraile "que remita las coplas del 'Chuchumbé' y desde qué tiempo se ha introducido" (292v). Él no contesta pero el comisario de Veracruz, Francisco Contreras, informa que "he sabido se practica entre gente vulgar y marineros" (293). El 16 de septiembre los inquisidores le piden que explique "en qué términos y con qué modales se practican los bailes que dicen del 'Chuchumbé' que sean contrarios a la modestia y buen ejemplo" (293). A lo que él contesta en carta del 23 de septiembre con el envío de las treinta y nueve coplas y una breve descripción del baile: "con movimientos y palabras deshonestas y provocativas" (296).

Esta descripción, sin embargo, no basta para formular el caso y por ello los inquisidores piden de nueva cuenta un informe detallando los "términos y modales" del son, informe que llega finalmente el 1 de octubre describiendo que el baile se realiza "bailando cuatro mujeres con cuatro hombres [. . .] con ademanes, meneos, zarandeos [. . .] manoseos de tramo en tramo, abrazos y dar barriga con barriga [. . .] [y] esto se baila en casas ordinarias de mulatas y gente de color quebrado [. . .] soldados, marineros y broza" (298). El comisario enfatiza el hecho de "mezclarse en él manoseos" y los danzantes "dar barriga con barriga." Según su versión, la performance expone la dinámica instintiva de los placeres carnales y despierta una intolerable inquietud sobre la proximidad del cuerpo, en especial de sus partes bajas. Además de la danza, el comisario señala el lugar en donde se realiza, a saber, casas de "mulatas y gente de color quebrado [. . .] soldados, marineros y broza" (298).

Mikhail Bakhtin advierte que al representar la parte baja del cuerpo la cultura popular elabora una reflexión sobre la muerte y la renovación; sobre la muerte con los intestinos, sobre la renovación con los órganos genitales (21). La exhibición pública del órgano sexual de un fraile en las coplas y las danzas "barriga con barriga" que las acompañan se burla de y celebra la parte baja del cuerpo. La copla revela una potencial generación de vida bajo el estéril hábito de un

fraile y la danza exhibe una instintiva proximidad entre hombres y mujeres que conduciría al acto sexual y a la procreación. Ambas imágenes (una poética, la otra performativa) manifiestan la muerte y la renovación del sistema religioso católico en cuanto a sus valoraciones del dogma del celibato y del ejercicio de la sexualidad.

La irreverencia de las coplas, la descripción de la obscenidad en la performance y la alusión indirecta al burdel conducen a los inquisidores el 27 de octubre a prohibir el "Chuchumbé" y apoderarse de sus versos al mandar que "traigáis y exhibáis ante nosotros [. . .] las citadas coplas [. . .] so pena de excomunión mayor *late sententiae* y de otras penas [. . .] en las cuales incurran los que [. . .] las retuvieren [. . .] o las leyeren o abusaren de ellas con su repetición y canto" (140).[12] Prohibiendo el "Chuchumbé" la Inquisición no prohíbe únicamente los versos y el baile sino el lugar de su ocurrencia, la fiesta que congrega a las clases mestizas, quienes por no ser ni indígenas ni africanas se sitúan en un punto difícil de adscripción administrativa. El "Chuchumbé" que cantan es obsceno en sus versos, seductor en sus bailes, expresa las pasiones más elementales del ser humano, incita al coreo o la danza y permite a una colectividad económica y socialmente reprimida liberarse momentáneamente de las restricciones de la iglesia y el imperio en lo efímero de la performance.

Al contrastar los personajes que aparecen en los versos del "Chuchumbé" y las personas reales de las denuncias se evidencia una reiteración de personajes, a saber, de soldados "de color quebrado," de mujeres de moral "relajada" y de frailes exhibicionistas. Los soldados son los "pardos" de la costa del Golfo de México quienes por su movilidad geográfica invadieron las principales villas novohispanas. Las mujeres, aquellas cuyas prácticas sexuales las trasladaron del ámbito privado al público. Y los frailes, quienes "violaban" el recinto sagrado teniendo sexo en el confesionario. La imagen del fraile obsceno del "Chuchumbé" expuso los escándalos de la solicitación sexual de sus hijas de confesión, una imagen tan real y tan grotesca que la Inquisición debió suprimir por convulsionar el dogma del celibato y el voto de castidad.

En el caso del "Chuchumbé" la Inquisición no sólo buscó prohibir la expresividad estética de los grupos mestizos, también silenciar los escándalos sexuales de los frailes. Al exhibir el "chuchumbé" clerical el bajo estrato social se burló de y celebró la sexualidad tanto de los frailes como de la "plebe." La obscenidad de su lírica se constituyó en

un mecanismo de defensa y transformó el espacio festivo en un espacio simbólico de resistencia a las políticas institucionales, desestabilizando en el centro de la fiesta popular el poder que tenían la religión y el virrey sobre el cuerpo de sus gobernados.

Soldados. En la vida cotidiana de la Nueva España las prácticas sexuales fuera de la institución del matrimonio se clasificaban automáticamente en el rubro de delito sexual. La "mera fornicación," sin embargo, ha sido un término problemático porque en el dogma católico no es un pecado capital sino venial, es decir, no afecta la relación entre el creyente y Dios pero sí la debilita, ya que a través de la práctica de pecados veniales el creyente es más vulnerable a cometer los mortales. La "mera fornicación" en una sociedad como la novohispana era, sin embargo, rutinaria, en especial en la vida de los soldados cuya movilidad geográfica los hacía formar un sinnúmero de familias informales.

Los soldados que aparecen en la denuncia del "Chuchumbé" son afromestizos[13] ("de color quebrado") y en el sistema de castas "pardos" que resultaron de la mezcla racial entre indígenas, esclavos libertos o cimarrones, y en menor grado, poblaciones españolas y criollas.[14] En la costa del Golfo de México los pardos habían trabajado principalmente como arrieros de ganado pero desde 1683, con el ataque del pirata Lorencillo, una gran parte se trasladó al puerto de Veracruz para servir en la milicia.[15] En las coplas del "Chuchumbé" las "voces" de sus mujeres hacen referencia a esta movilidad: "Me casé con un soldado, / lo hicieron cabo de escuadra / y todas las noches quiere, / su merced, montar la guardia" o "Mi marido se fue al puerto / por hacer burla de mí, / él de fuerza ha de volver / por lo que dejó aquí" (294). En estas coplas es posible encontrar algunos de los trazos que caracterizarían al soldado pardo de la costa del Golfo, a saber, la movilidad social ("lo hicieron cabo de escuadra") y geográfica ("se fue al puerto") pero, sobre todo, el ejercicio rampante de su sexualidad (en el eufemismo "y todas las noches quiere, / su merced montar la guardia" o "él de fuerza ha de volver / por lo que dejó aquí").

El "Chuchumbé" no sólo retrata las relaciones sexuales entre las mujeres y los soldados, también aquellas entre las mujeres y los clérigos, como ilustra la siguiente copla que, aunque no explicita la "voz" del soldado, podría serle atribuida: "¿Qué te puede dar un fraile / por mucho amor que te tenga? / Un polvito de tabaco / y un responso cuando mueras" (294v). La "voz" de la copla desacredita la conveniencia de

"tratar" con frailes dado su estatismo en la escala social. El soldado, por el contrario, podía ser ascendido y obtener mejorías económicas. De acuerdo con la denuncia, los soldados cantan unas coplas que hablaban sobre el "chuchumbé" de los frailes y las coplas muestran que no sólo las cantan sino que disputan con ellos—en el interior de las mismas—la posesión de las mujeres. En dos estribillos se hace explícita la "voz" del soldado. El primero dice: "Vente conmigo, / vente conmigo, / que soy soldado de los amarillos" (294v). El segundo: "Sabe vuesa merced que, / sabe vuesa merced que, / que me meto a gringo y me llevo a vuesa merced" (295). En ambos casos la "voz" del soldado establece la conveniencia de su rango para atraer a una mujer y las ventajas que puede tener para ella este emparejamiento.

Con la migración al puerto los soldados pardos experimentaron una ascensión económica y social además de una gran movilidad geográfica. La sociedad española y criolla de las principales ciudades coloniales parece haberse visto amenazada no sólo por su presencia sino también porque sus cantos y bailes, al existir fuera del recinto religioso, no podían ser vigilados ni regulados. El traslado de su cultura del medio rural al urbano se constituyó en una amenaza demográfica y simbólica para lo que Ángel Rama llama la "ciudad letrada," esa "pléyade de religiosos, administradores, educadores, profesionales, escritores y múltiples servidores intelectuales [que] manejaban la pluma [y] estaban estrechamente asociados a las funciones del poder" (25). Al ser los depositarios de los lenguajes simbólicos tuvieron que proscribir los que generaban las castas a través de su medio privilegiado: la escritura del edicto.

Sin embargo, la "ciudad real," la "formada por criollos, ibéricos desclasados, extranjeros, libertos, mulatos, zambos, mestizos" utilizó su movilidad física y social como recurso para expandirse geográfica y demográficamente (Rama 45). La Inquisición creyó que a través de la escritura detendría lo que sucedía en el terreno de lo real, esto es, la emergencia de sectores de la población mestiza. Esa población no sólo invadió las villas sino su espacio sonoro y en sus cantos y bailes sus prácticas sexuales encontraron un lugar de representación. El "chuchumbé," entonces, sería el de los frailes y los soldados que se introdujeron en las villas principales novohispanas, "violando" su tranquilidad y diseminando sus productos culturales.

Mujeres. Las mujeres son la piedra de toque en el triángulo amoroso que exhibe el "Chuchumbé." Bígamas o prostitutas, su sexualidad

trasciende del ámbito privado hacia el público. Ya he observado las ventajas que en las coplas parecen ofrecer los soldados a las mujeres (ascensión social y económica). A continuación mostraré cómo el "Chuchumbé" expone la negociación de su sexualidad como estrategia económica y cómo en las denuncias se condenan más sus prácticas sexuales que la acción de cantar, bailar, tocar o escuchar el son.

La movilidad de los hombres en la sociedad novohispana del siglo dieciocho dejó a madres solteras en la diatriba de qué hacer para solventar la crianza de sus hijos. A menudo estáticas, las mujeres buscaron medios para sobrevivir económicamente en una sociedad en la que no existía el trabajo femenino y el principal eran mantener relaciones sexuales, como evidencian las coplas del "Chuchumbé:" "En la esquina está parado / el que me mantiene a mí, / el que me paga la casa / y el que me da de vestir" (294v). Ahora, si los maridos las abandonaban, debían buscar un reemplazo que las sostuviera económicamente. Dolores Enciso Rojas estudia la bigamia femenina en la Nueva España y encuentra que, aunque menos frecuente que la masculina, preocupó al Santo Oficio por el desorden que implicaba para el censo. Sin embargo, como demuestra el *Catálogo de mujeres del ramo Inquisición del Archivo General de la Nación* la bigamia no tuvo tanta importancia en la criminalidad femenina (215 casos) como la hechicería (584 casos).

En el siglo de las luces se acrecentó la preocupación por los "polvos de bienquereres" que preparaban mulatas o indígenas para "amarrar" a los hombres. Noemí Quezada encuentra que estos polvos fueron "un mecanismo de resistencia al poder masculino [que] proporcionaba la posibilidad de someter al hombre a sus deseos y fantasías" (84).[16] La mujer se envestía de un poder mágico que podía atraer a un hombre, retenerlo, amansarlo, pero también librarse de él. Los versos del "Chuchumbé" ilustran el poder que tienen las mujeres (como objetos sexuales) sobre los hombres: "En la esquina hay puñaladas, / ¡ay Dios! ¿qué será de mí?, / que aquellos tontos se matan / por esto que tengo aquí" (294). El órgano sexual de la mujer referido indirectamente ("esto que tengo aquí") tiene el mismo influjo mágico sobre los hombres que se pelean que sobre el marido que "de fuerza ha de volver / por lo que dejó aquí."

Se advierte, al igual que en el caso de los "polvos de bienquereres," la conciencia de un poder femenino en el terreno de lo sexual; sin embargo este poder no trasciende hacia el espacio social, ahí son

los hombres quienes las mantienen. En los versos del "Chuchumbé" la "voz" femenina expone con amargura esta dependencia económica: "Cuando se fue mi marido / no me dejó qué comer, / y yo lo busco mejor / bailando el Chuchumbé" (295). La copla muestra la situación inestable de la mujer al ser económicamente dependiente del hombre (no tiene "qué comer") y la negociación de su sexualidad como estrategia económica. La mujer abandonada encuentra como salida bailar el "Chuchumbé," es decir, bailar el son "barriga con barriga" y conquistar a otro marido, o literalmente "bailar al pene" y obtener a través del sexo el alimento.

El desamparo de las mujeres en la Nueva España es también el de las prostitutas, las cuales al igual que el soldado aparecen en las coplas y en la performance del primer "son de la tierra." El 22 de julio de 1767 el clérigo Agustín Medrano denunció a "unas mujeres con unos soldados" que cantaban y bailaban el "Chuchumbé" en la vecindad llamada la Colorada, y aunque "no percibió [si] las voces del canto eran provocativas y escandalosas sí el son y baile" (14).[17] Una semana después, Gregoria Francisca Contreras, habitante de la vecindad, confirmó en su testimonio que unas "mujercillas" permitían la entrada "a toda clase de soldados" y tenían escandalizada a la vecindad "por los bailes y glosas que ha oído [. . .] especialmente de noche." También comentó que la dueña les pidió que se mudaran a lo que ellas contestaron que "como todas eran viejas en la casa y ellas muchachas y bonitas se querían alegrar;" por ello notificaron al fraile Cayetano Vuziz para que las "compeliera se mudasen" (14v). En su testimonio Contreras recalcó la entrada de soldados, las fiestas nocturnas y las actitudes desenvueltas de las jóvenes, de quienes dio sus nombres: Simona y Ana, y a quienes describió como "muchachas distraídas de ropa" (14v).

Un segundo testigo, el español Sebastián Garcés, se presentó el 8 de agosto, insistiendo en "las frecuentes visitas y entradas y salidas de soldados especialmente de noche" que calificó como "truhanerías" (15v). El testigo también narró una ocasión en la cual "aunque no entendió bien por estar medio sordo [. . .] oyó a unos muchachos de la misma vecindad que dijeron: "nosotros no bailamos ni cantamos el son prohibido por la Inquisición," dichos muchachos el uno es sobrino del padre Lhera" (15v). Garcés mencionó de manera imprecisa la presencia de estos jóvenes a quienes defendió de haber cantado el son incluso antes de ser acusados. También omitió sus nombres, aunque

no ocultó la afiliación de uno de ellos. Finalmente proporcionó datos inexactos, como el nombre de una de las mujeres, "Mariana," y aumentó el número de las jóvenes que ya en su testimonio sumaban cuatro—ella y "las otras tres" (15v). Además dio cuenta de la efectividad de los habitantes para deshacerse de sus vecinas: "[. . .] el padre casero las echó del cuarto por quejas de la vecindad" (15v).

Entre la denuncia y el segundo testimonio se replicó la necesidad de hacer "oídos sordos" a las coplas y no obstante, reconocer el son. El denunciante ignoraba si las canciones eran "deshonestas y provocativas;" el testigo dijo que no "entendió por estar medio sordo." Al respecto el inquisidor fiscal, el 19 de agosto, comentó que los testigos no acertaron a "expresar qué cantares ni glosas fueron las que oyeron sino tener entendido ser de los prohibidos" (18). Pero la contradicción reside en el hecho de que, si es cierto que no escucharon los versos ¿cómo pudieron reconocer el son? Si fue por la música, ello indica entonces que *sí* lo conocían y por ende, podían reconocerlo. Esta minucia, por supuesto, escapó a la pesquisa inquisitorial.

El 18 de agosto los inquisidores Fierro y Amestoy mandaron al fiscal Nuño Nuñez de Villavicencio para que "haga [a las mujeres] comparecer y reprehenda y amoneste se contengan en cantar sones y cantares prohibidos por este Santo Oficio" (18). El fiscal también pidió que se examinaran a los muchachos que citó Sebastián Garcés pero esto no se llevó a cabo. El 29 de agosto Nuñez de Villavicencio reunió a María Simona y Ana María junto con su madre María Márquez a quienes "reprehendí severamente el exceso de haber usado sones y cantares prohibidos" (20). Sin embargo, las mujeres "negaban haber cometido tal culpa" y para exculparse denunciaron a una de sus primas, María Josefa Guevara, quien "tomó una vihuela y cantó el 'Chuchumbé'" (20). El fiscal la hizo comparecer y recibió la misma respuesta dado que ella también "negó haber cantado el referido son" (20).

Aquí el proceso ya se volvió un carnaval. No sólo porque una gran persecución se solucionó con la reprimenda sino porque las acusadas negaron el hecho y acusaron a alguien quien a su vez también lo negó. El engranaje inquisitorial desplegó una energía que terminó por desinflarse en la clausura del caso. Y es que la intención en la acusación del clérigo era denunciar el "Chuchumbé" pero él fue el instrumento de los habitantes de la vecindad quienes en realidad querían deshacerse de las mujeres y del burdel que ya habían instalado. Pero el prostíbulo

no se mencionó en el proceso inquisitorial y la omisión es sintomática. Al parecer, ante los ojos del inquisidor era posible tolerar la prostitución pero no los sones. Ello demuestra una moral "conveniente" que resalta ciertos factores de criminalidad y disminuye otros.

La misma dinámica de énfasis y atenuación reaparece ese mismo mes en la segunda denuncia contra el "Chuchumbé." El bachiller Joseph Antonio de Borda acusa a Juana Gertrudis López, alias María Ignacia Fresco, viuda y con tres hijos, porque "ha cantado el son del 'Chuchumbé' [. . .] según me dijo una huérfana de las de mi casa," acompañada por el sargento Joseph Laya, "el que asiste con frecuencia en el cuarto de la nominada María Ignacia" (385).[18] Esta mujer, alerta el denunciante "pone puesto de comida en la plaza de día y no podrá hallarse en el cuarto que refiero" (385). Igualmente denuncia a dos sirvientas, Rosa y María, a un hombre llamado Tomás Pacheco y a unos adolescentes, quienes cantaron "así la tonada del 'Chuchumbé' como la del 'Animal' que según me dicen tiene unas voces: 'saranguandinga,' etc." (385).

En la denuncia aparece una constante: en realidad son las visitas de los hombres al cuarto de la viuda lo que escandaliza al denunciante. Y los "oídos sordos" vuelven. El contacto con lo obsceno recae en los oídos de los otros, en especial en la huérfana de la casa ("según me dijo"). Esta estrategia mantiene impoluta la conciencia del hombre quien, no obstante, enuncia una palabra obscena: la "saranguandinga." La sistematización de su denuncia va más allá del discurso, él abre caminos a la acción inquisitorial y la previene de que la mujer no estará cuando lleguen a buscarla. La denuncia es efectiva: el inquisidor Joseph de Ovello Rábago envía a Alonso Velásquez Gastelu, para reprender a las mujeres "agria y severamente al haber contravenido a su mandato cantando sones deshonestos y prohibidos" (386).

El 3 de octubre Juana Gertrudis López comparece ante Velásquez Gastelu, manteniéndose "negativa sobre el hecho" y callando "los cómplices de la lasciva canción imputada" (387). Rosa, María, el sargento Laya y los adolescentes también comparecen y son reprehendidos "aunque tan negativos como la principal" (387). El fiscal, no obstante, comenta que "quien únicamente se ha mostrado rebelde a mi citación y obstinado a su comparecencia es aquel hombre que se dice las acompañaba a cantar [. . .] llamado Thomas Pacheco" (387). De nuevo hay una reprimenda colectiva y además otra fuga (los jóvenes en la primera denuncia, Tomás Pacheco en la segunda).

Por la invariable que estos procesos exponen, las denuncias y los testimonios no censuran la obscenidad de los versos o las performances sino el comportamiento de estas mujeres que ejercen una sexualidad fuera del matrimonio, que albergan la fiesta y se rodean de hombres, soldados o adolescentes.

Aunque nunca se menciona en las denuncias, realmente se persigue a la prostituta; el término se ausenta pero no sus acciones. Las prostitutas son incompatibles con la moral continente de la iglesia católica pero las coplas del "Chuchumbé," por el contrario, les rinden un homenaje a través de los sugestivos apodos que les dedican, tales como la "Puta en cuaresma," la "Meneadora de culo" o la "Fornicadorita" (295). Los apodos a las prostitutas que aparecen en el "Chuchumbé" son la punta del iceberg de las "Décimas a las Prostitutas" que confiscó la Inquisición a Juan Fernández en 1782 y en las cuales aparecen apodos tan escandalosos como creativos: la "Moco," la "Engrilladita," la "Panochera Carrillos," la "Tiñosa," la "Miracielos," la "Derrepente," la "Culoalegre," la "Bienmesabe," la "Culohondo," la "Buencaballo" o la "Bocabajo" (Méndez 35–57).

Las prostitutas y los soldados no son los únicos en la fiesta del burdel. El fraile también forma parte de este triángulo. La "mera fornicación" de los clérigos fue largamente debatida desde los inicios de la iglesia católica. Bartolomé Benassar explica que los frailes argumentaron que si se les impedía acceder al burdel se lesionaban tanto sus propios intereses como la misma economía de las prostitutas y que ello los obligaba a forzar a sus hijas de confesión (288). Para terminar estas fortuitas prácticas sexuales el rey Felipe IV decretó el cierre de los prostíbulos en España desde 1623 pero como la "mera fornicación" no era sino un pecado venial el burdel siempre gozó de una velada tolerancia.

Frailes. Los frailes compartieron con soldados y otras clases descastadas el espacio del burdel y la fiesta, pero tuvieron además de este espacio uno sagrado, el confesionario, en donde si bien no entró la lírica sí lo hizo la obscenidad. Desde el confesionario, el erotismo de los frailes implicaba una doble traición para la Iglesia porque no sólo quebrantaba el proceso de implantación de una moral ejemplar en la grey católica sino que lo hacía literalmente desde el interior del sistema. El "Chuchumbé" expone las prácticas sexuales de los frailes de manera directa o indirecta: "El demonio del jesuita / con el sombrero tan grande, / me metía un zurriago / tan grande como su padre" o

"Esta vieja santularia / que va y viene a San Francisco, / toma el padre, daca el padre / y es el padre de sus hijos" (294).

En la primera copla se habla de un jesuita metiendo un zurriago (otro eufemismo para el pene) a una persona. Se exageran además las dimensiones de su "sombrero" o escroto. Esta hiperbólica descripción del órgano sexual del clérigo y la violencia que ejerce en la persona que funge como "voz" en la copla, son dos factores que permiten comprender la urgencia de la Inquisición por prohibir la difusión del "Chuchumbé." En la segunda copla se mencionan las visitas regulares al convento de una beata y la razón es que (como resultado de un proceso *toma* y *daca* claramente sexual) sus hijos son de un fraile. Esto es, los hijos no son sólo de confesión sino también de sangre. Los padres de la iglesia son literalmente padres de sus hijos. En estas coplas se denuncian sus prácticas sexuales y se desacredita la regulación de la autoridad eclesiástica sobre ellos.

El delito de la solicitación, de acuerdo con Marcela Suárez, se extendió a lo largo del siglo de las luces porque al ser eliminados los problemas de los luteranos, moriscos y judíos "el Santo Oficio quedó casi sin un objetivo prioritario contra el cual dirigir su complicada y precisa maquinaria y es lógico que su interés se volviera entonces hacia cuestiones que no [la] habían atraído tanto anteriormente" (17). La solicitación se define como el "hacer proposiciones deshonestas, o intentar seducir a sus hijas de confesión antes, durante o después de ésta o con pretextos espirituales" (Suárez 18). Ya desde el siglo dieciséis en la Nueva España se proclamó un edicto en su contra, pero en ese momento numerosas dudas aparecieron sobre si las indias, africanas y mulatas debían denunciarlo, ya que siendo "nuevas en la religión" no sabrían distinguir entre sus pasiones y sus responsabilidades religiosas.[19]

En 1716 se publicó un edicto que prohibía ciertos libritos que decían que "la mujer solicitada *ad turpia* en el acto de la confesión sacramental, no tiene obligación de denunciar si consiente en la culpa" (1).[20] Estos libros, de supuesto origen clerical, aprovecharon las numerosas vacilaciones del Santo Oficio para abrir espacios de libertad sexual. La solicitación de las hijas de confesión hacía tambalear el engranaje inquisitorio desde el interior de la iglesia. Y si el pene de los soldados "violaba" a las villas con su presencia, el de los frailes "violaba" el recinto sagrado. La intrusión de las fiestas de la "plebe" en las villas coloniales y del sexo en el confesionario, fueron situaciones

que perturbaron la regulación de la vida cotidiana que llevaban a cabo la iglesia y su instrumento coercitivo inquisitorial.

En suma, tanto la "mera fornicación" como los delitos sexuales de la bigamia y la solicitación amenazaban el equilibrio instituido por la iglesia y el virreinato; y afrentaban la institución del matrimonio, el dogma del celibato y el voto de castidad. La violenta fractura del tejido social de la sociedad novohispana del siglo dieciocho se cristalizó en el evento disruptivo de este son y la censura sirvió como instrumento terapéutico para restablecer ese equilibrio a través de la prohibición, el silencio y el olvido.

Howard Poole afirma que la censura no desaprueba las cosas sino a la gente y más precisamente, sus acciones (40). Judah Bierman, por su lado, asevera que la censura no se dirige a las personas (o sus acciones) sino a las representaciones que éstas construyen: "[. . .] lo que tememos y combatimos y prohibimos, lo que permanece irredimible por no tener un valor social son las representaciones del placer sexual" (14). No existe en ambos argumentos contradicción alguna sino una relación de continuidad. Las representaciones del placer sexual suelen excitar la imaginación y pueden originar acciones. El "Chuchumbé" representaba las prácticas sexuales de los pardos, de las mujeres de costumbres relajadas y los frailes; y podía originar acciones aún más graves (en la misma dinámica del pecado venial al mortal) como los movimientos de Independencia (que comenzaron a aparecer a finales del siglo dieciocho y principios del diecinueve); por ello debió ser refrenado, porque atentaba en contra de la implementación de una moral católica y una hegemonía imperial.

En *Vigilar y castigar* Michel Foucault advierte que el sistema de producción colonial debía contener la sexualidad de sus gobernados para garantizar la economía del gasto material: "[. . .] si se reprime el sexo con tanto vigor, es porque resulta ser incompatible con el trabajo general e intensivo" (112). El trabajo intensivo fue la base del imperialismo español en el continente americano y por ello las prácticas sexuales, y sus incitadoras representaciones, debieron ser reprimidas. El cuerpo debía disciplinarse y estar bajo control; por tanto, los poderes reales y religiosos promovieron la existencia de un "sujeto obediente [. . .] sujeto a hábitos, reglas, órdenes" (Foucault 129) que debía, idealmente, auto–regular sus pulsiones.

El control en el caso del "Chuchumbé" fue más allá de la injerencia institucional. El acto de denunciar al otro o la autodenuncia fueron

claves en la solidificación de este sistema disciplinario. La performance de los sones novohispanos se convirtió en un escenario problemático no sólo para los músicos sino también para la audiencia. Si alguien presenciaba algo considerado como inapropiado sentía la necesidad de denunciarlo para evitar ser considerado un cómplice. Para minimizar la sospecha, el acusado debía culpar a otros y desviar la mirada del inquisidor. El Santo Oficio implantó con sus numerosas prohibiciones y amenazas un vigilante super-ego (el "panóptico" foucaultiano) que condenaba al cuerpo a ser observado por sus coetáneos en cada una de sus actividades sociales. En las acusaciones en contra del "Chuchumbé" es evidente que los procesos legales no fueron tan efectivos (terminando siempre con una reprimenda) como la internalización de esa autocensura que consolidó el poder prescriptivo de la institución en la conciencia de cada uno de los individuos.

Así como cada persona era inquisidor, así también el "Chuchumbé" compartió con el Santo Oficio su voluntad de censura. Foucault advierte que "la memoria popular reproduce en rumores el austero discurso de la ley" (113). Ello significa que el individuo no sólo se refleja y hace reflejar a su audiencia en el interior de su(s) propio(s) discurso(s) sino que reproduce el discurso que enfrenta. En este sentido la performance (al igual que la obscenidad) refleja a la censura. El "Chuchumbé" imita a la Inquisición porque *está disgustado* con un proceder (la solicitación) que pasa impune ante las autoridades eclesiásticas, *critica* el comportamiento lascivo y excesivo de los frailes, los *culpa* de una práctica sexual no permitida y los *censura* al ridiculizarlos; él mismo se vuelve denunciante de una ilegalidad que le parece tan perturbadora como su misma acción ante los ojos de la ley.

Hasta aquí pareciera que fue la Inquisición la que ganó en la batalla en contra del "Chuchumbé." No obstante, las dinámicas de poder tanto de la obscenidad como de la censura, se muestran dialógicas. Cada instancia ofrece fortalezas y fracturas. La censura, por ejemplo, sufre de una gran contradicción ya que al reprobar lo que teme lo publicita y al hacerlo revierte su acción moralizante e incentiva el discurso, creando espacios para hablar de lo obsceno, para registrarlo y distribuirlo. Si la censura es una "incitación regulada y polimorfa hacia el discurso," de acuerdo con Foucault (47), el "Chuchumbé" es un buen ejemplo de esta diseminación ya que detonó en la lírica novohispana una descarga de sones paródicos y obscenos que denunciaban la afición clerical a los placeres de la carne.[21]

El "Chuchumbé" perdió la batalla al desaparecer del uso colectivo; ello demuestra la efectividad de la Inquisición en la restricción de la memoria oral, pero al ser registrado como documento legal prevaleció en la historia. A principios de los años ochenta Gilberto Gutiérrez, del grupo de son jarocho "Mono Blanco," exhumó los versos y grabó algunos de ellos en la producción "El mundo se va a acabar." En 1990 otro grupo de son jarocho se apropió del nombre y es llamado desde entonces "Chuchumbé." Hoy este son forma parte del repertorio musical jarocho. La reapropiación muestra cómo la oralidad entró en el terreno de lo escrito y encontró una salida de nuevo en lo oral. Esta vez transformada, el "Chuchumbé" ya no enfrenta a instituciones sino que consolida la identidad regional de los habitantes de la costa veracruzana.[22]

En la batalla que libraron el "Chuchumbé" y la Inquisición a finales del siglo dieciocho, hubo en el plano de la memoria y el olvido, de la oralidad y la escritura, suficientes victorias y derrotas. El Santo Oficio pudo conjurar el baile y las coplas del "Chuchumbé" pero no pudo frenar la presencia desestabilizadora de las castas, el erotismo rampante de hombres y mujeres y la ristra de aquellos "sones de la tierra" que lo sucederían invadiendo el espacio sonoro de las ciudades novohispanas. Lo guardó celosamente en sus archivos y lo preservó en la memoria del tiempo. El "Chuchumbé," sinécdoque del cuerpo de pardos y frailes, no soportó la restricción pero sus coplas, su música y performance pudieron, al menos, provocar la excitación y el miedo de sus censores, violar las actas inquisitoriales y volver hoy como espectros textuales para llenarse de nuevos significados. Si su derramamiento no alcanzó a fecundar ninguna subversión, al menos sí logró un inquietante barullo de disidencia.

Notas

1. Todas las traducciones del inglés o del francés al español son mías a menos que se especifique lo contrario.

2. El término "sones de la tierra" se alterna con el de canciones, aires o tonadas. En general los "sones de la tierra" serían un género lírico y coreográfico del siglo dieciocho con una estructura poética de copla y estribillo, acompañada de danzas, en reuniones llamadas fandangos.

3. Los análisis contemporáneos sobre el "Chuchumbé" han intentado situarlo en el mundo etno–musicológico o histórico y han obliterado el texto

y su performance; ello abre un espacio en la empresa del análisis textual que esta aproximación pretende completar. Algunos ejemplos incluyen: Rolando Antonio Pérez Fernández, "El chuchumbé y la buena palabra." *Son del sur* 3 (1996): 24–36; Rolando Antonio Pérez Fernández, "El chuchumbé y la buena palabra II." *Son del sur* 4 (1997): 33–45; María Águeda Méndez y Georges Baudot, "El chuchumbé, un son jacarandoso del México virreinal." *Caravelle: cahiers du monde hispanique el luso–brésilien* 48 (1987): 163–171.

4. Sobre la música indígena véase Dorothy Tanck de Estrada, *Pueblos de indios y educación en el México colonial: 1750–1821* (México: El Colegio de México, 1999).

5. Fernando de Ocaranza, "Relación histórica de los primitivos religiosos que plantaron la fe en esta Nueva España." *Capítulos de historia franciscana* (México: s/e, 1934).

6. En 1587 el Virrey autorizó las fiestas en la ciudad de México durante días festivos, del mediodía a las seis de la tarde, penando con cárcel y azotes a quienes hicieran lo contrario. Gabriel Saldívar, *Historia de la música en México* (México: SEP, 1934).

7. Santiago de Murcia, *Saldívar Codex No. 4: Santiago de Murcia manuscript of baroque guitar music (c.1732)* [. . .] (Santa Bárbara, CA: Michael Lorimer, 1987).

8. Sobre el "Padre nuestro" y los "Mandamientos."Archivo General de la Nación. Inquisición. Vol. 368. Exp. 12. Foja 65. Inquisición. Vol. 303. Exp. 8. Foja 34.

9. En la denuncia aparecen treinta y nueve coplas: veinte cuartetas octosilábicas y diecinueve estribillos organizados en dos o tres líneas, de metro y rima irregular. En general la trascripción carece de rigor y las coplas padecen de una indeterminación que puede deberse a la naturaleza en ciernes de esta lírica o al descuido del transcriptor. Las denuncias, por otro lado, en contra del "Chuchumbé" o de personas acusadas de haberlo cantado o tocado son cinco: la de 1766 en contra del son; la de 1767 en contra de Simona y Ana; la de 1767 en contra de María Ignacia Fresco; la de 1767 en contra de Juan Luis Soler (un cocinero español acusado por una india) y la de 1772 en contra del organista de la catedral de Xalapa (por haberlo tocado en la misa).

10. Inquisición Vol. 1052. Exp. 20. Fojas 292–295. Todas las coplas citadas provienen de la denuncia en contra del "Chuchumbé" y están localizadas en las fojas 294, 294v y 295.

11. La denuncia, las circulares administrativas, los testimonios y las ratificaciones se encuentran en el mismo expediente. Inquisición. Vol. 1052. Exp. 20. Fojas 292–298.

12. Edicto inquisitorial. Inquisición. Vol. 1075. Exp. 14. Foja 140.

13. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán acuñó en los años cincuenta el término

"afromestizos" para distinguir a los grupos de ascendencia africana de aquellos de ascendencia indígena o "indomestizos." Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México: estudio etnohistórico* (México: FCE, 1989).

14. Durante el siglo diecisiete las comunidades africanas experimentaron una libertad inédita en comparación con otros dominios coloniales. Los cimarrones (esclavos en fuga) establecieron quilombos, palenques y mocambos con los nombres de Mandinga, Matamba o Yanga. Alfredo Delgado Calderón, "Los negros del sur," *Son del sur* 1 (1995): 27–32. Octaviano Corro Ramos, *Cimarrones en Veracruz y la fundación de Amapa* (Veracruz: Citlaltépetl, 1974). Patrick Carroll, *Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity and Regional Development* (Austin: U of Texas P, 1991).

15. Tras el saqueo del pirata Lorencillo al puerto de Veracruz en 1683 se reclutó una armada de pardos para defender el puerto de los ataques piratas. "Bamburria" se le llamó al excesivo despliegue de fuerzas y según Aguirre Tinoco, esta sería la raíz de uno de los sones jarochos más célebres en México y el extranjero: "La Bamba" (46).

16. Entre los más inauditos ingredientes de estos polvos se encuentran sesos de asno, corazones de cuervo, dedos de ahorcado, cabellos, uñas, menstruo o excrementos que solían verterse en el chocolate o amasarse con las tortillas. Adriana Rodríguez Delgado, *Catálogo de mujeres del ramo Inquisición del Archivo General de la Nación* 142–51.

17. Denuncias, circulares, testimonios y ratificaciones en el mismo expediente. Inquisición. Vol. 1065. Exp. 3. Fojas 14–20.

18. *Ibidem*. Inquisición. Vol. 1019. Exp. 20. Fojas 385–387.

19. En 1581 el fraile Alonso de Noreña de Guatemala preguntó al Santo Oficio de México si el edicto "obliga también a las mujeres indias [. . .]. Por[que] vuestra señoría me ha escrito que por ser los indios nuevos y flacos a la fe que este Santo Oficio no conoce[n] de cosas tocantes a ello." Inquisición. Vol. 90. Exp. (80) 21. Foja 1.

20. Edicto inquisitorial. Indiferente Virreinal. Caja 0281.

21. En la parodia religiosa: las "Bendiciones" (1785), las "Boleras" (1797) y el "Bonete del Cura" (1808). María Águeda Méndez, *Amores prohibidos* 45–77.

22. Alfredo Delgado Calderón, "Semblanza histórica del son jarocho." *Son del sur* 8 (2000): 29–35.

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The Hour and Turn of João Guimarães Rosa: Symbolic Discourse and Death in the Academia Brasileira de Letras

Joshua Alma Enslen
University of Georgia

> [A]qui é uma estória inventada, e não é um caso acontecido, não senhor.
>
> Guimarães Rosa
> "A hora e a vez de Augusto Matraga"

> For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.
>
> *Hebrews 9.16*

João Guimarães Rosa's death—his moment of "absolute singularity" (Derrida 22)—took place on the 19th of November 1967. On the 16th of that same month, Guimarães Rosa finally accepted his chair at the Academia Brasileira de Letras (ABL), delivering a speech entitled "O verbo & o logos." This speech (presumably the author's last "literary" work) would be the first of three commemorative speeches to take place over the course of the next four days. The second address, by Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco, was delivered immediately following Guimarães Rosa's speech. In his address, Afonso Arinos ceremoniously welcomed Guimarães Rosa into the Academy. Yet, less than seventy-two hours later, Rosa unexpectedly died of a heart attack in his apartment in Rio de Janeiro. As a result, only four days after the author's induction, a third speech would take place. On the 20th of November, Austregésilo de Athayde delivered his eulogistic "Discurso de adeus a Guimarães Rosa," bidding farewell to the distinguished Brazilian writer and diplomat.

In the introduction to *Sobrados e mucambos*, Gilberto Freyre writes that "O homem morto ainda é, de certo modo, homem social" (xxxix). It is this sociality of death and its relationship to the writer

as a national symbol that is of interest in our analysis of these three ABL speeches. These speeches inhabit an exemplary "in between" space located at the crux of important cultural symbols, limits, institutions, and events which converge during the four day period that encompasses Guimarães Rosa's induction into this society "ad immortalitatem" and his death. To borrow from the memorialist Maureen Murdock that "[a]n individual memory becomes the repository of a familial or cultural memory" (115), these three works dredge deep currents within Brazilian history, geography and identity as they seek to find suitable national symbols for representing death in the ABL. This article will analyze how Athayde's eulogy of Rosa together with Guimarães Rosa's own and Arinos's speeches seek not only to bring national significance to the inductee's life and work, but also serve as equally mythical readings of the entire nation in light of the death of one of its most celebrated authors.

The ABL was founded in Rio de Janeiro by Machado de Assis and others such as José Veríssimo and Joaquim Nabuco in 1897 with a mission to standardize the nation's language while also canonizing its literature. The "Estatutos da Academia Brasileira de Letras," written in the same year the institution was founded, clearly and concisely delineate this purpose. Originally modeled after its French counterpart, the ABL memorializes, through election, those Brazilian authors whose works have been perceived as being of national consequence: "Só podem ser membros efetivos da Academia os brasileiros que tenham, em qualquer dos gêneros de literatura, publicado obras de reconhecido mérito ou, fora desses gêneros, livro de valor literário" (Henriques 10). The ABL represented a sincere interest on behalf of late 19th century intellectuals to further the project of national integration by creating a society of Brazilian writers whose works had "reconhecido mérito."

Although they were unable to predict the political turmoil that would characterize Brazil in the coming century, the ABL's founders had already imagined, in counterpoint to the unstable politics of the First Republic (1889-1930), the importance of a steadfast literary establishment. The ABL envisioned itself as a society capable of classifying the parameters by which literature and language could accompany political and economic developments. Along with being founded contemporaneously with the organization of the First Republic, the early members of the ABL also witnessed the unprecedented economic growth of, and immigration to, southeastern Brazil.

By glorifying Brazil's preeminent historians, critics, and writers, the ABL helped to engender a sense of collective right to national self-determination, crucial for the definition of Brazilian identity among the elite. Accordingly, Machado de Assis, in his inaugural address, anticipated that the role of his institution would be to "conservar, no meio da federação política, a unidade literária" ("Na Academia" 926). Likewise, Joaquim Nabuco, at the same session, proposed that: "A formação da Academia de Letras é a afirmação de que literária, como politicamente, somos uma nação que tem o seu destino, seu caráter distinto" (par. 17). Thus, it was proposed by its founders that, although the ABL should be a function of the national project, it should not be subject to coeval political troubles. In his inaugural speech, Machado further reiterated that the ABL needed to follow the French Academy's example in order to "sobreviver aos acontecimentos de toda a casta, às escolas literárias e às transformações civis" ("Na Academia" 926).[1] Or rather, to borrow from Homi K. Bhabha, Machado suggests that the ABL should not be grounded in any specific literary school or political movement, but be grounded in the "nation as a symbolic force" (1).

This symbolic role of the ABL in proposing an immutable constancy in the face of political change is no more evident than in the manner by which the institution has glorified its deceased members while maintaining control over the admission of new ones. In the ABL, there is a constant membership of forty Brazilian writers, corresponding to an equal number of available chairs. In order for a new writer to be elected into one of the forty chairs, a current one must first pass away. The seat then becomes available for a successor to assume occupancy and take his place in the literary society.

In 1908, the ABL's first president, Machado de Assis, passed away and Lafayette Rodrigues Pereira was invited to take his place. Lafayette had, years previous, defended the work of Machado against the criticisms of Sílvio Romero by publishing four contestatory articles in the *Jornal do Comércio* (Montello, *O Presidente* 318). For this reason, he was deemed by the ABL as Machado's appropriate successor. Lafayette accepted the invitation, but for unknown reasons he refused to deliver the traditional "Discurso de posse" that would have praised Machado's life and work. Since Machado de Assis was, in the words of Josué Montello, "a mais alta glória literária do Brasil," he was denied by Lafayette's refusal to speak, "o louvor que

lhe era devido" (*O Presidente* 320). Years later in 1926, the Academy would still feel that too little had been done to memorialize their first president. That year, the then president Coelho Neto appealed to the nation for the construction of a monument that would venerate the memory of Machado de Assis. For Coelho Neto, this monument would represent the "glorificação devida a um dos maiores vultos da literatura pátria e um dos mais peritos lapidários da língua portuguesa" (Montello, *O Presidente* 333).

In the words of Jeffrey D. Needell, the predominant concept among the members of the Academy at its founding was that "national literature was the nation's soul, memory, and conscience" (182). The role of death in creating this society "ad immortalitatem" reflects the elite's impetus towards glorifying the nation by glorifying its literature. As demonstrated by this example with Machado, when a member of the ABL dies, the society attempts to affirm through symbolic discourse the assurance of that writer's place within the national canon of literary "immortals." When Lafayette refused to deliver his "Discurso de posse," he frustrated this process.

With Guimarães Rosa's death decades later, this process would be far from frustrated. Not only would Rosa be glorified through Athayde's speech just after his death, the whole affair was shrouded in death–both symbolic and real. Even Rosa himself contemplated the subject in his speech praising his predecessor, the deceased fellow writer-diplomat João Neves da Fontoura. While speaking, Guimarães Rosa echoes Freyre's core implication cited previously by stating that, "A gente morre é para provar que viveu" (85). Death, in this sense, instead of being the antithesis of life, represents the final step in a social process by which one's life takes on collective significance for the survivors. In Guimarães Rosa's case and in that of other "immortals," it is left to the ABL to decide how to construe the "proof" of the deceased's life in a way that depicts the institution's own symbolic glory.

While proclaiming Guimarães Rosa's work as "uma das conquistas mundiais da cultura brasileira" (100), Afonso Arinos's speech deals with death on a literary level. He postulates that the death of Diadorim in *Grande sertão: veredas* symbolizes "uma espécie de expressão mais alta da humanidade" (103). Four days later, Athayde's speech would be no less symbolic. He proposed that, through death, Guimarães Rosa became a part of "[a]queles que a morte revitalize,

sendo perene portanto o processo reintegratório do humus fecundo" (111). If Guimarães Rosa was culturally invigorated by death, as Athayde suggests, then this symbolic turn to life takes on monumental national significance within the Academy. Concerned not necessarily with Guimarães Rosa's physical remains, but rather with his social ones, these ABL speeches configure death in a collective sense in order to consolidate and perpetuate an eternal national ideal linked with literature. Similar to Machado, Guimarães Rosa, as a canonized writer within the ABL, is articulated in these speeches as the cultural gatekeeper of the nation's eternal narration.

In order to provide "proof" of the writer's immortality, the commemorative speeches surrounding Rosa's death align themselves with important national symbols. In his speech, Afonso Arinos compares Guimarães Rosa's writing to Brasília: "Fizestes com elas [as palavras] o que Lúcio Costa e Oscar Niemeyer fizeram com as linhas e os volumes inexistentes: uma construção para o mundo, no meio do Brasil" (99). Although its construction is most directly associated with the Kubitschek presidency, Brasília is a national symbol that is greater than the period in which it was created. Brasília, similar to the empty chairs in the ABL, is a physical location continually (re)occupied by successive political representatives. Thus, Arinos proposes that Brasília and Guimarães Rosa represent, the former physically and the latter discursively, the empty space wherein the nation might be written "no meio do Brasil."

If nations are at once finite and imagined as infinite,[2] the successful creation and articulation of national symbols through writing is necessary in order to affect the erasure of their finitude. Death brings to the forefront this paradox since, according to Derrida, it is an ambiguous cultural and biological event that imposes a limit (42). The limit imposed by death is reflected at the borders of nations and cultures. As those who write the nation cross the border of death, there is space for what Derrida calls the "possibility of the impossible" (11). The ambivalent spaces of death allow for proscription since "Dying is neither entirely natural (biological) nor cultural. And the question of limits articulated [. . .] is also the question of the border between cultures, languages, countries, nations, and religions" (42). Even if death, and specifically Guimarães Rosa's death may be, as Derrida proposed, a phenomenon that "names the very irreplaceability of absolute singularity (no one can die in my place or in the place of the

other)" (22), within it rests a sufficient emptiness to allow for grounding its collective meaning in the nation.

In his speech "O verbo & o logos," Guimarães Rosa contemplates the challenges of adequately remembering João Neves, the predecessor to his chair. He expresses a sense of obligation to portray João Neves's "individual greatness" not as relative to his life, but rather in absolute terms: "Como redemonstrar a grandeza individual de um homem, mérito longuíssimo, sua humanidade profunda: passar do João Neves relativo ao João Neves absoluto? Sua perene lembrança–me reobriga" (59). In this way, with the advent of physical death, the relativity of João Neves's life becomes transformed through its "perennial remembrance" into an absolute. Guimarães Rosa recognizes writing as an inexact, yet necessary operation of contextualizing an absolute. By remembering his predecessor as an entity not destroyed by death, but rather made absolute by it, Guimarães Rosa gives cultural and collective significance to the individual life of his predecessor. The next two sentences in the passage read: "O afeto propõe fortes e miúdas reminiscências. Por essa mesma proximidade, tanto e muito me escapa; fino, estranho, inacabado, é sempre o destino da gente" (59). In this way, writing becomes an "unfinished" act that, like death, has limitless rhetorical possibilities.

Although it is true that the relationship between death and the nation in the ABL reflects in a relative sense the ways in which death's collective meaning may be symbolically inscribed within certain geopolitical borders, in the case of Guimarães Rosa, remembering or writing death also conversely demonstrates an erasure of borders between the physical and the metaphysical. This erasure of borders is needed to express a parallel between the "absolute" individual and the infinite nation. According to Guimarães Rosa, as he and Neves worked together as diplomats, they often referred to one another by substituting their proper names with toponyms. In Guimarães Rosa's speech, this habitual occurrence between the two expresses a limitless metaphysicality that replaces not only Neves and Rosa's limited individual mortality, but also the nation's delimited geography:

> Por mim, freqüente respondia-lhe topando topônimos. –"*Cachoeira concorda?*" –se bem que, no comum, o chamasse "Ministro." Escuto-o: –"*E agora? Que há com Cordisburgo?*"
>
> – Muito, Ministro. Muita coisa [. . .] (58)

Just as topographic dots and lines on a physical map represent the literal shape of the nation, the substitution of João Neves's proper name for his hometown of Cachoeira, Rio Grande do Sul and that of Guimarães Rosa's proper name for his hometown of Cordisburgo, Minas Gerais articulate these writer-diplomats as toponymic metaphors, capable of giving metaphysical form to Brazil. Through the articulation of this substitution, these dialogues between Guimarães Rosa and João Neves "induce the body to become a cultural sign" (Butler 522), erasing the borders between the individual and the nation.

By linking Guimarães Rosa's implication that within this toponymic metonymy there is "muita coisa," we can begin to consider the repercussions of his prior remark: "entendíamos juntos, do modo, o país entrançado e uno, nosso primordial encontro seriam resvés íntimos efeitos regionais" (58). As these writers transform themselves discursively into "efeitos regionais," Rosa's speech not only proposes an eternal connection between writing and Brazil, but also elides the political, cultural, and even geographic differences found within its territory. This elision is accomplished by implementing a mystifying homogenous discourse which casts Brazil's long history of struggles between regional cultures and politics as mere "efeitos regionais" in favor of the national consolidation of a "país, entrançado e uno" (58). As they become the loci for national metonymy, Rosa and Neves amass cultural weight transformed from writers of the nation into writers-as-the-nation, replacing Brazil's physical borders with a limitless metaphysicality. Or rather, as long as Rosa and Neves remain "perene," so does Brazil.

Drawing a parallel with the early years of the ABL, this metonymy is reminiscent of the words of Coelho Neto when he proposed that "AINDA QUE ELE PRÓPRIO, com a pena, haja construído o monumento perene do seu nome,"[3] Machado, through the construction of a monument that would be a "preito nacional," could "tornar à superfície da vida ressurgido em glória" (Montello, *O Presidente* 332-333). Just as Neves and Guimarães Rosa were to be grounded in fixed geographic locations, Machado's monument was to affix his memory to a visible public space in Rio de Janeiro. Whether in the streets of Rio, in an empty chair of the ABL or in the sertão of Minas Gerais, the ABL transforms writers of the nation into writers-as-the-nation, providing the visible physical "proof" of literature's symbolic national role.

This transformation of João Neves, Guimarães Rosa and Machado de Assis from the "relative" to the "absolute" is ultimately only possible through death because it creates the discursive space wherein the appropriate symbols might be constructed. The toponymic metonymy found in Guimarães Rosa's speech produces a powerful metaphor that inhabits the symbolic space associated with the traditions of writing, death and the nation in the ABL. Guimarães Rosa erases the borders of João Neves's relativity to fictionalize an absolute "mundo mágico" (87) in which the writer and nation can symbiotically and symbolically coexist. Through death, João Neves's relevance in the land of the living is guaranteed as he passes "para o lado claro, fora e acima de suave ramerrão e terríveis balbúrdias" (85) becoming a permanent fixture, like the "fortes gerais estrelas" and the "mugibundo buriti," in the landscape of Guimarães Rosa's "magic" Brazil (87).

Once Guimarães Rosa's speech was concluded, he was, in keeping with tradition, ceremoniously received into the Academy with Afonso Arinos's address. Concerning the new inductee's literature, Arinos suggested: "Vosso poder criador foi descobrindo, na sucessão das obras-primas, um mundo de símbolos, que testemunham realidades insuspeitadas da vida e do espírito" (93). Correspondingly, the most expressive of these moments in which Arinos proposes the literary to not only "testemunhar," but also actually transform "realidades" evolves around the death of Diadorim in Rosa's *Grande sertão: veredas*:

> Entre mar e céu surgem da vossa pena as figuras imortais dos homens e mulheres de um outro Brasil, que ambos conhecemos e amamos, o dos campos gerais das savanas do São Francisco. [. . .] Vossa representação simbólica desse homem e dessa mulher, em síntese, chegou ao ápice na figura de Diadorim, homem e mulher ao mesmo tempo. Há, para mim, outro símbolo na morte de Diadorim, que é uma humana transfiguração. Vivo, na luta suja da vida, ele era homem; mas morta ela se transfigura em mulher, sem sexo, neutra como na palavra alemã, elevando-se a uma espécie de expressão mais alta da humanidade. (103)

Arinos's interpretation of the death of Diadorim proposes that writing has tangible social ramifications because it may "movimenta[r] e dirig[ir] a mutação incessante da realidade" (102). This mythical

narrative process is linked with the sociality of death to the degree that Diadorim's heroic yet violent death becomes capacitated to transform the living. According to Arinos, as the author creates some "outro Brasil" in *Grande sertão: veredas*, Rosa's "figuras imortais" begin a modal process of transposition that culminates with their articulation as symbols of all humanity, exemplified by Diadorim's death. Thus, for Arinos, writing death "unifica a diversidade e assegura a continuidade" (102). Erasing the inequalities not only between nations, but also between "men" and "women" everywhere, the symbol of death multiplies the image of Diadorim into an endless expression (however imaginary it may be) of the eternal solidarity of all humankind. While Guimarães Rosa's writing is described by Arinos as "a arquitetura do Planalto, uma das conquistas mundiais da cultura brasileira" (100), Diadorim's death likewise immortalizes Brazilian literature to the degree that it places the nation's inhabitants in sentimental concord with those of other nations. For Arinos, Diadorim's death and the "arquitetura do Planalto" form the interchangeable parts of a symbolic puzzle that superimpose themselves interminably over the image of Brazil in order to elevate the nation to universal glory.

Taking place just one day after Rosa's death and four days after his acceptance into the ABL, Austregésilo de Athayde's speech suggests that the actual death of Guimarães Rosa is no less unificatory than that of Diadorim. The symbolism of Athayde's "Discurso de adeus a Guimarães Rosa" attributes transcendental power to the deceased author through religious imagery.

> [Ó] querido e breve companheiro, taumaturgo sertanejo, senhor de invenções inauditas, profeta do mundo que se desentranha, de culturas primitivas seculares, atrevido bandeirante de realidades ainda não sondadas, João Guimarães Rosa! São incontáveis os serviços à tua pátria, cujo renome e prestígio aumentaste entre as nações [. . .]. (110)

By evoking the image of the prophet, Athayde transforms Guimarães Rosa into a medium for the expression of a "divine" national will and destiny. The "prophet" Guimarães Rosa, instead of being in the service of God, is in the service of Brazil. Thus, something akin to Walt Whitman's conception of the poet-prophet,[4] Athayde's representation

of Guimarães Rosa as one that has borne "incontáveis [. . .] serviços a tua pátria" takes on monumental significance.

In order to envision national "realidades ainda não sondadas," Athayde constructs for the ABL a mythical image of Rosa connected with the nation's dominant religious discourses. This relationship between the religious and the literary evokes a Romantic image of "artists as special people and art as sacred" (Kernan 27). In Brazil, imagining death through "símbolos de imortalidade" associated with mythical-religious power and authority, such as "figuras de dragões, leões, anjos, corujas, folhas de palmeira ou de louro, santos, da própria Virgem, do próprio Cristo" has long accompanied the memorial traditions of the elite (Freyre xl). As this politics of death manifests itself in the arena of national literature, Guimarães Rosa, as a writer, becomes an eternal symbol of what it means to be Brazil(ian).

Joaquim Nabuco, in his "Discurso de Posse" at the ABL's inaugural session on the 20th of July, 1897, declared:

> As Academias, como tantas outras coisas, precisam de antiguidade. Uma Academia nova é como uma religião sem mistérios: falta-lhe solenidade. A nossa principal função não poderá ser preenchida senão muito tempo depois de nós, na terceira ou quarta dinastia dos nossos sucessores. (par. 8)

The discursive space created by Guimarães Rosa's death provides Athayde with a singular occasion in which he might reemphasize the ABL's "mistérios." By Athayde articulating Guimarães Rosa as a prophet of the "pátria, cujo renome e prestígio aumentaste entre as nações" (110), Rosa's transformation is constructed at a temporal and cultural crossroads of Brazilian history. A pre-colonial history of "culturas primitivas seculares" and a colonial history of "bandeirantes" converge with the nation's future "realidades ainda não sondadas" over a solemn, yet still fatidic, authorial and, above all, national body (110).

Another striking example of a connection with the religious is Athayde's peroration that explicitly appendages itself to the Bible as it contemplates Guimarães Rosa's newfound "eternal" glory:

> E uma das tuas páginas flui a naturalidade desta reflexão consentânea com a sabedoria de Eclesiastes: "As coisas por si mesmas, por si, escolhem de suceder ou não, no prosseguir."[5] A escolha de suceder foi feita, feita por si mesma, nos desígnios da divina Graça, a qual te recobre com a Sua luz, neste derradeiro passo da eternidade que começa. Neste nosso adeus há muito de saudade, consideração e amor, mas o seu profundo sentido é o do testemunho unânime do País [. . .]. (111)

The appearance of three words in this passage that begin with the majuscule—"Graça," "Sua," and "País"—open the way for furthering a religious connection. The appearance of the first two—"Graça" and "Sua"—represents a typical expression of reverence for God. Yet, by allocating the majuscule also to the word "País," Athayde shows that it is not only deity that is revered. The speech places Brazil on the same level as the "divina Graça." Thus, in like manner to Guimarães Rosa's sanctification as a prophet, this deified designation of the "País," as it stands personified "[. . .] reclinado [. . .] sobre as aparências humanas [de Guimarães Rosa]" (111), reflects the religiosity through which an intellectual institution whose maxim reads "ad immortalitatem" is obligated to navigate in order to shore up its national designs. Thus, what is of note here is not the religiosity proper of Brazil or Brazilians, but rather the speech's manipulation of religious and historical symbols to give "eternal" national relevance to Guimarães Rosa's writing and death.

The ambivalence between "Graça" and "País" is further complicated in its relationship to the memorialized writer by such slippery and highly subjective phrases as "claridade do teu espírito," "passo da eternidade," "admiração universal," and especially "[a] alvorada de tua bem-aventurança" (111). But, those who write the nation must articulate such ambiguities in an effort to guarantee a mythical rendering or, as Guimarães Rosa suggests, a rendering that is "entrançado e uno." Even Guimarães Rosa, in his own speech, reflected on this relationship between "Graça" and "País." Quoting Arthur da Silva Bernardes, Rosa self-referentially proclaims: "*O fim do homem é Deus, para o qual devemos, preferentemente, viver. Eu, porém, vivi mais para a Pátria, esquecendo-me d'Ele*" (83).[6]

In these three speeches, dissolution by death is no less an option for the culturally enfranchised members of the ABL than it is for the

nation. Thus, in order for the nation's scholarly dead to be transfigured into national symbols, these discourses must impose upon their bodies metaphysical attributes of religious, topographic and literary entities for which death poses no threat of dissolution. In Guimarães Rosa's speech, this turn to the metaphysical is constructed by using toponyms as substitutes for proper names. In this way, Guimarães Rosa creates an infrangible metonymy between the writer and the nation, simultaneously erasing the limits of the writer's mortality and the nation's finitude. Similarly, for Arinos, Diadorim's death becomes a means to universally glorify Guimarães Rosa's writing, arguing that it is a symbol of the solidarity of all humankind. In the last speech, Athayde connects Guimarães Rosa to religious imagery by consecrating him as a transfigured mythical prophet. As a prophet for the nation, Athayde expresses the author's "absolute" greatness while also embodying the infinite greatness of Brazil, depicted as a personified being mourning the loss of one of its most celebrated authors.

Years before the founding of the ABL, Machado de Assis had already contemplated the importance of writing in sustaining a national project when in "Instinto de Nacionalidade" he suggested how, through criticism, Brazilian literature "[. . .] se desenvolva e caminhe aos altos destinos que a esperam" (804). Death is an important mechanism by which the ABL has asserted the national importance of literature. Death in the ABL transforms Guimarães Rosa and other writers into mythical symbols capable of overtaking Machado's "altos destinos" while also allowing for the creation of Nabuco's institutional "mistérios." In the ABL, physical death enriches the writer's social cachet and provokes the cultural maelstrom by which the institution might emerge empowered to articulate the "solemnity" of its mission. Where the political borders provide the blueprint, these speeches surrounding Rosa's induction into "immortality" provide the suitable *magma* for expression. Indeed, at the time of Guimarães Rosa's death, Afrânio Coutinho would propose that, because of Guimarães Rosa: "O Brasil é realmente uma literatura já hoje brasileira" (132).

The national project of the ABL, not limited only to this episode involving Guimarães Rosa, is sustained by death because of the discursive space it creates within the ABL's process of election. In particular, these three ABL speeches set the nation into perpetual motion as they write and rewrite Brazil's eternal rejuvenation through symbolic discourse and death.

Notes

1. All antiquated Portuguese orthography has been modernized.

2. Although this article deals primarily with the articulation of death as it proposes the ABL's imagined infiniteness as a parallel with that of the nation, many of the ideas herein on the role of writing in constructing an "eternal" nation are indebted to *Nation and Narration* (edited by Homi K. Bhabha) as well as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

3. Emphasis appears in the original.

4. Speaking of the religiosity of writing in association with "the advent of America, and of science and democracy," Whitman writes: "Only the priests and poets of the modern, at least as exalted as any in the past, fully absorbing and appreciating the results of the past, in the commonality of all humanity [. . .] recast the old metal, the already achieved material, into and through new moulds, current forms" (1061). English orthography has been modernized.

5. Athayde is quoting from Guimarães Rosa's short story "No prosseguir" found in *Tutaméia: terceiras estórias*: "As coisas, mesmas, por si, escolhem de suceder ou não, no prosseguir" (99).

6. The italics appear in the original.

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Forms of Memory in Recent Fictional Narratives from Uruguay: Summoning the Dictatorship in "Mnemonic Interventions"

Alexandra Falek
New York University

How do contemporary writers in Uruguay evoke the civil-military dictatorship (1973–85) in recent fictional narratives? What do these narratives indicate about the workings of memory in post-dictatorship society? This article considers these questions by analyzing three recent fictional narratives from one post-authoritarian country in which there are ongoing legal, political, and social debates about memory and cultural expression with regard to the dictatorship period. The article contributes a reflection on remembrance and recognition of the dictatorship "past" in narratives that make use of a mnemonic practice: a citation or summoning of the dictatorship that I call a "mnemonic intervention." In this way, the narratives of the three writers I have chosen make some aspect of the dictatorship present in a specific form of memory. The narratives studied here bring together concerns that stretch from Uruguay during the dictatorship into the present. The presence of the interventions in recent Uruguayan narratives is significant in a country in which the dictatorship, and its unresolved issues, are still at the forefront of the political and social consciousness of many citizens.

This article will discuss the play *Malezas* (2006) by María Pollak, and the short stories, "El diecinueve" (1999) by Mario Benedetti, and "La abeja sobre el pétalo" (2003) by Hugo Fontana. These narratives are distinct from others about the dictatorship in that they neither totalize nor directly represent the dictatorship; nor do they overtly narrate violence, fear and other aspects of repression.[1] Rather than describing or representing the dictatorship in a realistic and documentary manner, these fictional works summon the period with a mnemonic intervention that directly cites the dictatorship. These citations conjure the

dictatorship by naming some aspect of the period in a direct reference, exposing it, making it visible. The presence and function of the mnemonic interventions illuminate continuities between the dictatorship and the present. In post-dictatorship Uruguay, closure of the events of the dictatorship has not yet been possible. While some individuals, who are responsible for political violence, repression, and human rights abuses, have been tried and convicted, critical information about the military forces' activities during the dictatorship has not yet been disclosed.[2]

In March 1985, Julio María Sanguinetti became president, just one year after he obtained the majority nomination for the democratic election. With his new administration, he established an official discourse based on denial and forgetting with regard to the immediate past. The administration promoted an environment of amnesia, which influenced citizens to "move forward." Eduardo Galeano commented on the generalized fear and amnesia that characterized society just after re-democratization in 1985:

> El miedo de saber nos condena a la ignorancia; el miedo de hacer nos reduce a la impotencia. La dictadura militar, miedo de escuchar, miedo de decir, nos convirtió en sordomudos. Ahora la democracia, que tiene miedo de recordar, nos enferma de amnesia; pero no se necesita ser Sigmund Freud para saber que no hay alfombra que pueda ocultar la basura de la memoria. (98)

This fear of knowing, listening, and speaking had been rampant under the repressive politics of the dictatorship years. In the newly established democracy this fear was also present, as Galeano suggests above, most evidently in relation to efforts by citizens, artists, and some political activist groups to openly talk about the dictatorship and to begin to demand accountability regarding both detained and missing Uruguayans. Many attempts to bring the dictatorship into public debate were doomed to be "swept under the rug," as Galeano suggests above.

Meanwhile, as historian José Rilla notes, in the new democracy in 1985 Uruguayans had many expectations regarding democratic life and its possibilities:

> Muchos incluso llegaron a pensar que con la vida democrática se resolvían muchas cosas de Uruguay. Nunca

> como en 1984 tuvimos una especie de consenso tan fuerte conforme al cual había que reponer la democracia y que desde ella se podía sacar a Uruguay de la crisis. La democracia fue respuesta [. . .] pero los problemas de la vida del país están allí. (207)

Yet contrary to citizens' hopeful expectations, the reality of what the newly established democracy could change was bleak. In August 1986, Sanguinetti and his administration drafted the amnesty law that would exonerate military officers for their involvement with the dictatorship regime. Four months later, in December 1986, this amnesty law known as the *Ley de Caducidad de la Pretensión Punitiva del Estado*—widely referred to as the Law of Impunity (*Ley de Caducidad*)—conferred impunity to military officers implicated in the dictatorship. The Armed Forces would be free from taking ownership for its crimes. Today, the Law continues to protect them from trials and from having to acknowledge their crimes.[3]

Benedetti's story "El diecinueve" poignantly illuminates the impunity of one former military officer and torturer who "meets" his victim twenty years after the dictatorship and says to him: "No tengo que dar explicaciones. Ni a usted ni a nadie" (51). After implementation of the Law of Impunity, concerned citizens in social and political sectors publicly denounced it, and established the National Commission Pro Referendum (*Comisión Nacional Pro Referendum*) in January 1987.[4] Two years later, in April 1989, Uruguayans participated in a national referendum in which they could vote either to annul the Law, which would rescind the impunity granted to former repressors, or to ratify it. The months leading up to the final vote were marked by intense debates. Government officials encouraged ratification, convincing Uruguayans that sustaining the Law was the "healthiest" political strategy for the country and its citizens since it would allow everyone to "move forward." The politicians in Sanguinetti's administration insisted that the "moral well being" of the country depended on refusing to dwell on the events of the dictatorship. They warned citizens that voting to revoke the Law could result in the return to an atmosphere of repression, violence, censorship, and fear. In this environment laden with confusing messages, the majority of Uruguayans voted for ratification, indefinitely extending the Law.[5] This vote established a legal way for the government to ensure amnesty for military

officers and to strengthen the already pervasive amnesia, described above by Galeano.

Today, almost twenty years since the referendum, former military officials continue to deny responsibility and to withhold pertinent information with respect to the dictatorship. Many others have died (by natural death and/or suicide) literally taking with them key information that could be used to indict former repressors and locate the remains of Uruguayans still missing since the dictatorship period.[6] While the number of Uruguayan citizens that disappeared and/or were murdered without explanations during the dictatorship is notably less than in neighboring countries under dictatorship such as Argentina and Chile,[7] the impact of the disappearances in Uruguay has been just as significant. Confidential information about what happened to these people continues to distress the victims' friends, families, and communities. The missing persons, or *desaparecidos*, are constantly remembered and commemorated by Uruguayans who persist in their efforts to turn years of denial into recognition. After carrying the burden of the dictatorship for years, many citizens continue to demand accountability. One way of doing this is to publicly remember the "presence" of the *desaparecidos*. For example, each May 20th they are remembered in Montevideo in the March of Silence. At this march, participants utter the words "Present, always" 'Siempre presente') after the name of each *desaparecido* is read aloud. In the gesture of remembering and evoking the *desaparecidos*, citizens challenge the fact that those who are to blame for the disappearances have not yet taken ownership of their actions.

The particular transitional politics in Uruguay marked by denial and forgetting left countless issues unresolved—namely the lack of accountability and the necessity to disclose relevant information—issues that continue to foment anxieties about memory, knowledge, and the events of the dictatorship. In this context, it may not be surprising that aspects of the dictatorship period continue to surface in cultural production. In contemporary post-authoritarian societies still marked by struggles for and against sustained discussions about the authoritarian regimes—such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay in the Southern Cone region—fictional narratives that summon the dictatorship constitute a critical factor in the continued shaping of cultural memory, as well as in the legal, political, and social activity in these societies. This article deliberates one way that the resurfacing of historical events occurs in fictional narratives published

during the last eight years in Uruguay. Mnemonic interventions, as a particular form of memory, provide an important way to engage remnants of the past in the present. I have developed this concept of "mnemonic interventions" as a way of naming a phenomenon that may be found in a wide range of cultural production including film, literature, theatre, and other visual arts, in Uruguay and in other post-dictatorship societies. Let us consider the concept and significance of a mnemonic intervention more closely.

I propose "mnemonic interventions" as an analytical tool for reading certain narratives, in order to open them up to cultural analysis. I contend that because mnemonic interventions can stimulate some level of response in readers, these readers can become aware of the importance of these interventions and how they operate in their country's cultural memory. An understanding of the concept of mnemonic interventions and the ways that they function in recent fictional narratives is crucial for broadening the established spaces for memory and knowledge of the period. The established spaces include the March of Silence, the continued publication of testimonial and scholarly narratives about the period, popular music, and other cultural production that engages the dictatorship. Mnemonic interventions, like these other spaces for memory, have a strong mnemonic utility for citizens that choose to engage them. The steady expansion of these spaces is largely a function of a lingering crisis of confidence in regard to citizens' needs for answers and their demands for justice with respect to the dictatorship. Mnemonic interventions in some recent cultural production contribute to the possibility of a more complex understanding of the dictatorship.

A mnemonic intervention calls forth, or cites a "remain" from the dictatorship. The English word "remain" comes from the Latin "*remanere*," from *re-* (expressing intensive force) and "*manere*" (to stay).[8] To remain is "to continue to exist" and "to be left over after other parts have been completed, used, or dealt with." A mnemonic intervention in the narrative cites aspects of the dictatorship that "continue to exist," yet most of these aspects have not been "dealt with."A mnemonic intervention draws the reader's attention to the dictatorship, while simultaneously inviting the reader to consider remains of the dictatorship still present in contemporary society. The continuity that exists between the past and the present is inextricably linked to the remains that continue to have an effect on contemporary Uruguay, as historian Álvaro Rico suggests:

> [. . .] a pesar del cambio de régimen, el autoritarismo deja efectos, secuelas, herencias, traumatismos, cuentas pendientes, que la institucionalidad democrática no solo no resuelve plenamente sino que, por el contrario, silencia y enmascara de muchas maneras, incorpora a su propia estructura legal-institucional o disemina como relacionamientos sociales, culturales y psicosociales cotidianos. El golpe de Estado y la dictadura se vuelven así el presente de la historia, el 'ahora' democrático. (223)

Rico articulates the way that certain "traces" of the dictatorship continue to impact multiple aspects of society.[9] These traces include worsening economic conditions, the extant Law of Impunity, the still missing human remains of citizens that have neither been located nor identified by their surviving families, and the secretive and inaccessible official archives related to the dictatorship. In the narratives studied in this article, the traces of the dictatorship manifest themselves as remains, as aspects of the dictatorship that have not yet been resolved. Pollak, Benedetti, and Fontana inscribe these remains into their texts by means of a summons: they evoke the dictatorship, instigating remembrance as a narrative strategy akin to Andreas Huyssen's notion that "the past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory" (2).

In some ways, citation is similar to representation as a strategy that "instigates remembrance" as Huyssen suggests above, by engaging and maintaining contact with the dictatorship period. Yet conceptually, representation and citation are distinct and function differently. A citation is unlike representation in that it is not a "reproduction in some manner."[10] In this way, a mnemonic intervention does not symbolically or realistically represent (describe, narrate, or dramatize) events of the dictatorship. A citation emphasizes the idea of a summons or a mention.[11] A mnemonic intervention performs the functions that the definition of summoning indicates: it "requires the presence or attendance of" the dictatorship by mentioning it; it "calls into existence" and "calls forth"[12] traces of the period.

Though a mnemonic intervention may seem unimportant at first, upon closer consideration, it may generate further reflection and awareness. Its presence in a narrative illustrates the possibility for engaging the dictatorship without taking on the trauma model

commonly used to approach literature and cultural production related to the dictatorship and its repression. And its purpose is to call attention to the dictatorship, by naming it, contributing to a larger mnemonic register of the dictatorship period. Especially today, when younger Uruguayans come to learn about the dictatorship mostly through mediated memories and mediated information, mnemonic interventions are a narrative concept that presents a way into remembrance, acknowledgement, and awareness. Perhaps they may also provide stimulation for political or social action with regard to the many unsettled matters of the dictatorship period.

Pollak's *Malezas* and Benedetti's "El diecinueve" exemplify a mnemonic intervention that takes the form of a ghost. Each narrative evokes a *desaparecido* who makes his/her absence present to those who were sure they would never see or talk to the dead. Each *desaparecido* makes a spectral appearance that reminds others of his/her absence. This appearance reminds others that nobody has taken ownership for his/her disappearance. Cultural Studies scholar Jo Labanyi draws from Derrida in her discussion of ghosts in post-Franco films and novels from Spain. She observes that ghosts act "as the traces of those who have not been allowed to leave a trace (Derrida's formulation), and are by definition the victims of history who return to demand reparation" (66). While Labanyi's work examines the post-Franco period in Spain—a different context from post-dictatorship Uruguay—her discussion of ghosts in Spanish society after Franco is relevant to this examination of ghosts and remains of the dictatorship in contemporary Uruguayan society.

There are striking similarities between the transitions to democracy in Spain and in Uruguay, such as the strong rhetoric of "moving forward," and the continued absence of justice and recognition at the state level. In both countries, the newly established democratic administrations worked carefully to shirk responsibility for the crimes of the authoritarian regime, insisting on denial and forgetting rather than accountability and justice. Some of the effects that this had in each country were a rapidly decreasing perception and confidence of the country for many of its citizens, a heightened sense of a crisis of competence at the state level, and a slow, but ongoing, emergence of the unresolved issues in many realms of society.

Labanyi turns to Derrida's notion of haunting—"hauntology"—used to explore the ghostly afterlife of Marxism after the death of

Marxism.[13] In *Specters of Marx* (1994), Derrida discusses the multiplicity and heterogeneity of what he calls the specters of Marxism that continue to haunt Europe in the present. Labanyi draws from Derrida's reading for her analysis of hauntology and ghosts in Spanish society. And I turn to both of these critical works to explore mnemonic interventions in recent narratives, as they evoke a similar notion of "ghostly afterlife." In the first two narratives studied, mnemonic interventions can be observed in the form of a ghost that makes itself present. The ghost's unsettling appearance functions as a persistent reminder of the still-unresolved issues related to the dictatorship. Labanyi writes, "Ghosts can be placated only if their presence is recognized" (71). The specter in the narratives "appears" in order to demand recognition and acceptance, making a space for itself in the present. Let us first examine a scene from María Pollak's *Malezas*:

> CLARA. Hoy encontré una foto donde estamos todas, no sé exactamente de cuando es pero . . . ustedes no tenían ni seis meses.
> OFELIA. Entonces es del 73.
> LEA. A ver . . . pah . . . que horrible . . . parecemos los muppets . . . ¿quiénes nos sostienen?
> CLARA. Mostráme . . . somos Sofía y yo . . . qué caras de susto . . .
> [. . .]
> SOFÍA. ¿Y ésta?
> CLARA. No me digas que no reconocés a Azul . . .
> SOFÍA. No, la verdad es que no me acordaba . . .
> LEA. Azul . . . ¿quién es?
> OFELIA. Con esta pasó algo raro.
> CLARA. No es el momento de hablar de eso. (35–36)

In this scene, the women are gathered for the 80th birthday party of the family matriarch, Doña Felipa. Nobody has heard from Azul—the figure in the photograph that Sofía does not recognize—since the day she was kidnapped, thirty years ago. Sofía and Clara are Azul's first cousins; Lea and Ofelia are second cousins, from the younger generation. While Ofelia knows that "something strange happened" to Azul, Lea does not recognize her, as nobody in the family has ever spoken about her. After this conversation, Azul, who has been standing next

to her cousins (without their seeing or sensing her spectral presence), stands off to the side of the stage and begins to recount the story of what happened the night that the photograph was taken. Azul's cousin Dulce—one of only three women at the party who can "see" and "talk to" Azul—stands beside Azul, joining in with the other cousins while each woman on stage takes a turn in narrating the events of that night, each one recounting it from her point of view. That night marked the beginning of many years of silence and detachment in the family. The family would be forever distanced by what happened, by Azul's disappearance, by Uncle Ricardo's involvement in her disappearance, and by the repressive atmosphere that permeated society over the next twelve years.

Azul's spectral appearance at the party is the first time that she has "visited" her family since the night that she was kidnapped. Although her family members have never spoken about her since her disappearance, they have been affected by her absence, an uncomfortable reality that lingers obstinately like the weeds (*malezas*) that grow in Doña Felipa's garden. The night of the party Azul has "come back" after thirty years "to do" something: to see her family and to demand recognition of her family's role in her disappearance as well as their silence about it. Derrida explains that a specter comes back "to do" something: "The cadaver is perhaps not as dead, as simply dead as the conjuration tries to delude us into believing. The one who disappears appears still to be *there*, and his apparition is not nothing. It does not do nothing" (97). Azul "personifies" this specter who has returned "to do" something specific.

Of the three women who are aware of Azul's presence and can "see" her—Dulce, Ducle's daughter Catalina, and Irma, the grandmother's unfriendly and straight-faced caretaker who has been part of the family since the time that Azul and Dulce were young girls—it is Irma who resists Azul the most. She knows specific details about what happened the night that Azul was kidnapped, yet she has never shared this with anybody in the family. As such, she is the first to "sense" Azul's presence, and the one who most denies it. Catalina can "see" Azul, yet she does not know her and therefore cannot "recognize" her. Irma, however, does engage Azul in a conversation just before the guests arrive. She seems nervous that Azul has appeared, telling her that it is not in Azul's best interest that she has "come back." Azul knows Irma well, and responds, sarcastically, that actually it is not in

Irma's best interest that she has come: "No te conviene que esté aquí" (11). After a few more words and the first guest's arrival, Irma warns Azul not to enter the house. Irma strongly denies Azul's spectral presence, as she continues to deny history. She seems especially obstinate in her denial of Uncle Ricardo's complicity in Azul's disappearance, and of her knowledge of this complicity.

It is not until the third scene that Dulce "sees" Azul. The two cousins are in the backyard: Dulce has come to cut roses for her grandmother. She is surprised to see Azul, yet accepts her immediately. Within seconds they are conversing as if they have been there together forever, as if Azul had never become an unexplained absence. Dulce confesses that fourteen years ago she found Azul's diary, and that today she was going to reveal a "secret" to her cousins. She was finally going to expose the fact that Uncle Ricardo was involved in Azul's disappearance. She says to Azul, "Les voy a contar lo que dice el diario. Al fin de cuentas son nuestras primas [. . .] nuestras amigas [. . .] además, yo se los prometí" (31). Azul is quick to correct her, remarking that they "were" friends and cousins, that things are different now after so many years of denial and forgetting. Dulce gives her reasons for having taken so long to tell the cousins about the diary and the family secrets: they never got together again after Azul's disappearance, and so she had nobody to tell, and nobody to trust. She had been afraid then, and that fear had never gone away: "[. . .] sólo tenía miedo [. . .] miedo de tenerlo [. . .] miedo de mostrarlo [. . .] miedo de no tenerlo" (33). In a later scene, Catalina finds the diary and devours the pages of her aunt's reflections. When Irma sees that Catalina has the diary, she demands that Catalina give it to her; she recognizes the diary and knows its contents. Catalina refuses: "No es tuyo. Para qué lo querés? Para que no se sepan las verdades que están escritas aquí [. . .] muchas verdades" (61). Catalina knows that the "leyenda familiar" about Azul is marked more by lies than facts. Just after this quarrel between Irma and Catalina, Azul makes an "appearance" before Catalina. Yet Catalina has never met her and believes that she is a friend of Irma's.

Some of the cousins claim not to remember Azul. Others, like Ofelia and Lea, were very young when she disappeared. None of them have acknowledged what happened to her. Dulce welcomes and accepts her, recognizing her spectral presence. She is ready to talk about what happened, ready to live with this ghost. Her acceptance

is similar to Derrida's proposal to keep ghosts close, and allow them to come back. He writes that "one must not chase away" or forget what he calls "untimely specters" because forgetfulness, he writes, "will engender new ghosts" (87). Irma, on the contrary, shuts Azul out as something frightening, and tries to forget her. She cannot tolerate Azul's spectral presence. For her, Azul is an obstinate memory that continually resurfaces, a nuisance that will not go away. Irma opens herself to Derrida's idea of the engendering of new ghosts: the more she attempts to deny Azul's spectral presence by pushing her away, the more forcefully Azul returns.

Like Azul, who is unrelenting, the weeds that Irma cannot eliminate grow back every morning, a bit taller than the morning before. It is worth noting that there is a particularly obstinate patch of weeds that grows just above the pit where Azul's friend Roberto used to hide arms during the dictatorship. Azul tells Catalina about Irma's futile struggle to do away with the weeds: "Todas las noches corta las malezas [. . .] y todas las mañanas las encuentra crecidas, para ella es un misterio" (60). Like the weeds highlighted in the title, Azul persistently leaves a "trace" of herself: she makes room for herself in the present and permits her cousins to have their space as well, with or without her, aware of the fact that they may never ask more questions about her or their family's involvement in her disappearance. Azul allows the living, her family members, to have their space in the present. She does not insist, and she does not make demands, as the ghost in Benedetti's story "El diecinueve" does. Azul leaves her cousins "in peace," even though they refuse to recognize their past. Yet she does not go away, but instead makes a space for herself in the present too.

Malezas is one of the most recent—and one of the few—theatrical performances written in Uruguay to evoke the dictatorship period and its impacts on families, society and daily life, thirty years after the return to democracy.[14] One possible reading posed by the play is that it speaks to the unresolved issues related to the dictatorship that continue to linger in contemporary society. It calls spectators' attention to the still-uncertain status of disappeared Uruguayans, and to the continued denial and injustice with regards to the dictatorship. Azul's spectral presence forces Irma to acknowledge the continuity between the dictatorship and what Rico calls the democratic "now." It forces Irma to recall the events of the past, to remember the night of Azul's disappearance, and to recognize that her disappearance still

has a significant impact on the family, despite a general desire to leave the "past" behind.

Pollak's recent play is similar to Benedetti's story "El diecinueve" in that it is a reminder and a commemoration of still-unaccounted-for Uruguayans, and still-unrecognized crimes. Diecinueve (in "El diecinueve") and Azul (in *Malezas*) are ghosts that have "come back" for the first time after more than twenty years. Both narratives communicate a critique of the still extant Law of Impunity. In both narratives, a mnemonic intervention is present in the form of a ghost. Pollak and Benedetti conjure specters from the dictatorship, situating the interventions in an environment of anxiety in the present. The specters in both narratives have come back "to do" something: they desire a space for themselves in the present and stress the impossibility of bringing about a definitive "end" to the dictatorship. In order to carry out these objectives, Diecinueve and Azul make a spectral appearance, breaking through the surface of the narrative in a mnemonic intervention, demanding acknowledgement from those they have come to visit and addressing the unfinished business.

In Benedetti's story, Diecinueve is the specter of a *desaparecido* who, like Azul, performs the above-discussed functions of a citation: he "requires the presence" of the dictatorship, directly mentioning it, "calling it into existence," and "calling forth" himself as an absent person. "El diecinueve" imparts awareness of a particular aspect of the dictatorship, drawing the reader's attention to the trans-national collaboration between dictatorial regimes—Plan Condor—in the Southern Cone region. It tells the story of Farías, a Uruguayan military officer, torturer and death flight operator during the dictatorship, and Diecinueve, an Argentine citizen and supposed "subversive" militant during the same period. Farías and Diecinueve have a face-to-face encounter at Farías's home, where he has been living "in peace" despite the crimes he committed years before. Diecinueve does not have a proper name other than the number assigned to him before he was thrown to his death from a plane—like many Argentine and Uruguayan citizens during the dictatorships—into the Río de la Plata, the river that forms part of the border between Argentina and Uruguay.

Farías desperately wants to believe that Diecinueve is just a ghost in his imagination, a ghost that has appeared to cause trouble, and therefore must be avoided and denied. However, Diecinueve insists

that he is not a ghost, and that against all odds, he survived the fall from the plane that was meant to kill him. His appearance, breaking the surface of Farías's present, demands acknowledgement. His presence guarantees that Farías will remember Diecinueve and all of his other victims "que aún no contrajeron el vicio de resucitar" (50) as Diecinueve sarcastically says to Farías. Diecinueve wanders into the narrative and into the life of his former torturer. He has appeared in order "to do" something: he wants Farías to "see" him and to remember him. Diecinueve has come back to remind Farías that he is still "there" and that Farías must accept him and admit his presence: "Sólo quería que me viera," (50) he says to Farías. He also wants Farías's family to "see" him. Diecinueve promises to not tell them who he "really" is, yet he knows that their "seeing" him will further confirm the "reality" of his presence. Farías tries to keep his calm and "invites" Diecinueve into his house, introducing him as a friend. Meanwhile Farías continues to convince himself that Diecinueve is just a ghost. Did he really not drown in the river with the others? "Esto no puede ser," thinks Farías (50), his shock evident as he introduces this ghost "friend" from his dark past to his wife and children.

Shortly after, Farías escorts Diecinueve to the front gate and breaks into tears, clearly shaken by his unexpected "visitor." Suddenly he stops sobbing, as if attempting to disallow this moment. He shouts, "¡Sos un fantasma! ¡Un fantasma! ¡Eso es lo que sos!" (53). But these words do not make Diecinueve go away. Instead he answers: "Por supuesto muchacho" (now putting aside any hint of respect by using the informal *tú* form), "Soy un fantasma. Al fin me has convencido. Ahora limpiáte los mocos y andá a llorar en el hombro de tu mujercita. Pero a ella no le digas que soy un fantasma, porque no te lo va a creer" (53). Now that Farías's wife has also "seen" Diecinueve, Farías can no longer believe nor deny Diecinueve as a ghost, he will have to respond to Diecinueve and to what Derrida describes as a ghost's "demands that one take its times and its history into consideration" (101). Farías cannot comprehend Diecinueve's appearance: he is from "the past" and should not have a space in the present; he should not be "allowed" to come back. Yet insisting on his presence is the work that Diecinueve has come to do. By making a space for himself in the present, he forces Farías to remember, and to "deal with" him again.

After so many years of denial and silence, Farías is deeply unsettled by Diecinueve's sudden "appearance." Diecinueve's visit—distressing

for Farías—summons the dictatorship period in the present, making it "visible" for Farías. Diecinueve's presence reminds Farías of his still denied responsibility for past crimes; it interrupts Farías's pleasant and unremorseful life of contemptible impunity. Yet, as Derrida writes, "the more life there is, the graver the specter of the other becomes, the heavier its imposition. And the more the living have to answer for it" (109). Diecinueve's appearance, or "imposition" as Derrida states, is both "grave" and "heavy" for Farías. What he most loathes is Diecinueve's demand that he "answer" for his past crimes. Diecinueve expects acknowledgement from Farías, who now has to "answer for the dead, to respond to the dead," as Derrida writes. Diecinueve is an interruption in Farías's life. Like Azul in *Malezas*, Diecinueve is a specter that summons the dictatorship, stimulating remembrance and acknowledgement as a remain that persists in being. Like Irma in *Malezas*, Farías rejects Diecinueve, trying to absolutely avoid and to refuse this ghost who has wandered back into his life. After so many years of impunity, forgetfulness and denial, Farías, like Irma in *Malezas*, has opened himself to Derrida's idea of "engendering new ghosts" (87). The more Farías tries to deny Diecinueve by pushing him away, the more likely other specters from his dark past will also make themselves present.

As we have seen, a mnemonic intervention can take the form of a specter—as in *Malezas* and "El diecinueve"—that functions as a trigger, making what remains of the dictatorship visible for both protagonists in the narrative and for readers. An intervention can also take the form of a direct reference to some aspect of the dictatorship—a quick and direct summons of a name, place, date, or other detail unambiguously linked to the period—as illustrated in Fontana's short story "La abeja sobre el pétalo."

In the first pages of this story, a supposedly "objective" narrator directs the reader's attention toward Miguel, descriptions of his small town, and its inhabitants. He does not name "exciting" things. Instead, he narrates the predictable characteristics that are the lifeline of the town, such as the weekly dances in the main plaza. Four pages into the story, Miguel says, "Cualquiera hubiera dicho que los bailes de la plaza no se iban a terminar nunca, pero nunca es un adverbio de tiempo y el tiempo es equívoco" (54). By using the imperfect, "no se iban," with the infinitive, "a terminar," Miguel insinuates the probability of a future action, emphasizing that at one time nobody in town thought that anything could disrupt the

regularity of these dances. By using this grammatical construction, he intimates that the dances are indeed about to come to an end. Even this seemingly unchangeable weekly dance was about to undergo a major transformation in ways that nobody could have expected. He remembers a particular dance: "Un domingo de diciembre de 1971, algunas semanas después de que el presidente Jorge Pacheco Areco pasara por el pueblo en plena campaña electoral, hubo un baile organizado por un grupo de jóvenes que se reunían semanalmente en el salón parroquial" (54). Miguel's memory of this dance conjures up a specific event that took place on a particular Sunday in 1971.

His summons of this dance is significant for three reasons. First, it was the last dance that was held in town before the *Golpe* in 1973. Second, the dance took place after Pacheco Areco had been to town at the height of his electoral campaign. Readers may recognize the name Pacheco Areco, a household name during the years leading up to the dictatorship.[15] Miguel then describes the delightful environment of the dance: the music, the musicians, and the foxtrot, two-step, waltzes, and slow songs that the couples danced. These details establish both the familiarity and the importance of the dances. Finally, he names a third matter related to the dance, the reference point in his memory to a major disruption in his personal life: it was just before or perhaps right after that dance that the horrifying rumor—that his parents were siblings—began to spread. He does not remember exactly when the rumor began, but his memory of this shocking rumor, an abrupt change in his previously uneventful life, is unmistakably linked to this last dance before the *Golpe*.

His memories of this dance function as a catalyst for recollecting other drastic events that occur in the town during this same period. Many things begin to change just after the dance: "Tuvieron lugar otros hechos, acaso mínimos, insignificantes, que mi memoria no ha retenido por debilidad o desidia" (56). Miguel narrates three events that he remembers from this turbulent period, two of which are discussed here. As each one transpires, news and rumors about them travel quickly from one neighbor to the next. The town's inhabitants seem unprepared to react or respond to these unprecedented events. As a result, a general environment of fear, confusion, and widely spread rumors settles into daily life. Each event that Miguel narrates is a mnemonic intervention in that it cites a specific aspect of the changing social environment before and during the dictatorship.

The first event is the day that Eloísa gives birth to a baby with two heads. This shocks the town for two reasons. First, everybody thought that Eloísa, who had moved to the town in her forties, was "destinada a la más injusta soltería" (56); nobody ever expected that she would have a baby. Second, the town's inhabitants have never witnessed or heard of a birth of such an anomalous creature. The rumors begin to fly: "La noticia corrió como reguero de pólvora," says Miguel, and this monstrous birth shocks the town, dominating all conversations: "La pobre Eloísa tuvo un niño con dos cabezas fue lo único que se escuchó por días y días en todos lugares del pueblo" (56). People stop in the middle of the street to talk about what has happened, just to say it out loud. Some people even empathize with Eloísa's bad luck: "aquella desdichada mujer no se merecía semejante suerte" (57). But in the end, Miguel remembers, everybody was overtaken by so much fear that there was little space to have compassion for Eloísa. The town's inhabitants had to take care of themselves and their families first. They had to contain their own fears and circumstances, afraid to talk to the neighbors yet desperate to understand what was occurring in their town.

Miguel transmits this atmosphere of disbelief, confusion and fear by means of recounting this event that so radically upset life in this small town. Not only is this birth upsetting to Eloisa, her neighbors, and the rest of the town's inhabitants, but it even manages to upset the normal activity within the church. When Eloisa decides that she wants to baptize the baby, the priest is not sure whether he must perform the baptism once or twice. After all, the baby has two heads. He must ask for advice from the archbishop, who tells him to consult a book published in Palermo in 1745, hoping to clarify the procedures for such an exceptional circumstance. But the baby dies before there is time for even one baptism. The perplexity amongst the clergy resembles the general puzzlement of the town's inhabitants. And not only does this event bewilder the town's inhabitants and the church, but journalists also come from the capital city to report on the birth of Eloisa's two-headed baby. Even Pipo Mancera, a well-known television broadcaster at the time, sends telegrams from Buenos Aires asking permission to come with his team to shoot for the next edition of *Sábados Circulares*, a popular television program aired on Saturdays. Everybody seems intrigued yet disgusted. While they want to get close and to understand what has happened, they are uncomfortable

with the strangeness of the situation. Unusual events have begun to transpire in this quiet and-uneventful-place, forever agitating the calm tediousness that previously characterized life in this town.

Two weeks after Eloisa gives birth to her monstrous baby, María Elvira delivers Siamese twins. Like Miguel's memory of the impact of the two-headed baby, this memory conjures up a specific event that takes place after the last dance. The memory corresponds to another phenomenal occurrence. María Elvira's Siamese twins are unlike all others: one is born sitting right on top of the other. Like Eloísa's two-headed baby, María Elvira's babies do not survive very long. Both mothers must bury their babies within the first month of life. Miguel refers to the birth of the Siamese twins as a "live metaphor" of the times: "Una metáfora viva, casi una denuncia para tiempos convulsos en los que la gente iba presa y era torturada hasta la muerte por cualquier irreverencia" (57). Here Miguel cites the dictatorship by both criticizing and naming the imprisonment and torture carried out by the military. This second unparalleled occurrence that has shocked his town again echoes the repressive and violent atmosphere of the country under dictatorship. People in town are surprised to learn about these perplexing events (Eloísa's two-headed son and María Elvira's twins) just as Uruguayan citizens are surprised to learn about the imprisonment, torture, disappearance, and death organized by the military regime. As noted earlier, the news of the Siamese twins, like all news during this period: "corrió como reguero de pólvora" (58). Miguel repeats this comment frequently, and in each repetition, the image of the quickly spreading rumors gains intensity.

There are so many rumors about the grotesque births in this town that the news eventually reaches the capital city: "[. . .] llegaron al despacho del presidente Juan María Bordaberry, el sucesor de Jorge Pacheco Areco" (58). Again, Miguel directly cites the dictatorship, here by naming Bordaberry, who executed the *Golpe* in 1973, and again, Pacheco Areco. One of Bordaberry's advisors encourages him to "make an appearance" in this previously uneventful town, as the situation in the country is rapidly worsening due to "la crisis institucional, pedidos de renuncia, subversión, aumento de pobreza, prolegómenos del golpe de Estado" (58). Miguel's memory of María Elvira's twins—and all of the memories that he conjures up related to this turbulent period—corresponds to the rapidly deteriorating social and political situation in his town and in his country. Up to this point,

he has evoked numerous aspects of the dictatorship without describing or representing it realistically. He summons the dictatorship, names the problems, and then continues where he had left off.

He moves on to narrate the third incident that categorically shakes his town: the day that the recently arrived soldiers run over a pig that has the face of a little girl. He cites the dictatorship by naming the new and now indefinite presence of the soldiers in town, their inexplicable actions, and the seemingly uncontrollable freedom with which they carry out their "business." And then he explains that what came next: "llegó el olvido" (59). On a literal level it is not hard to imagine how these events have both paralyzed and disturbed the town. The oblivion that Miguel names also refers to the denial and forgetting, or amnesia, so actively encouraged by Sanguinetti's government just after re-democratization, which intended to move the country forward after so many years of violence and repression.

For Miguel and the other astounded inhabitants in town, the period during which these unprecedented events take place seems endless. And then finally, in one more unexpected turn in the narrative, Miguel informs readers of his complicity in the bizarre events. Nobody had ever suspected that Miguel—or anybody in particular—would take ownership for these occurrences that so drastically disturbed the town. Miguel has kept silent for ten years, never once admitting responsibility or disclosing information with respect to the events. He has refused to recognize his involvement, living unbothered amongst his neighbors. Rather than publicly acknowledging responsibility, Miguel "cundió el silencio durante años" (59). His silence echoes the prolonged silence of former repressors and collaborators of the dictatorship in Uruguay.

What might we think about Fontana's fascination with physical defects and "monstrous" deformities in the story? Not only do these peculiar creatures have physical defects, they all die prematurely. We can read the physical defects as a metaphor for the dangers and social crisis brought on by the state imposed by violence and repression. The dictatorship regime caused distortions and deformities, among citizens, among families, among communities, and within the nation as a whole. Momentous changes have profoundly and permanently shocked Miguel's small town, greatly disrupting its routine activities and social structures. The uncanny events do not reproduce the dictatorship period, yet they directly cite it, as with

Miguel's naming of Bordaberry and Pacheco Areco. While some readers may not recognize the allegory of the aspects of the dictatorship and the transition, readers from Uruguay will be aware of this implicit association made identifiable by Fontana. The story has its strongest impact by citing the dictatorship in mnemonic interventions, that is, by making aspects, memories, and information of the dictatorship present and "visible."

Malezas, "El diecinueve," and "La abeja sobre el pétalo" illustrate the shifts in form, perspective, and content of literary narratives that engage the dictatorship since re-democratization. Many early post-dictatorship narratives made use of the explicit mode of direct representation by realistically describing the everyday fear, loss, violence, and repression common during the dictatorship.[16] Like other cultural works, literary narratives will continue to evolve as new political and legal decisions take effect in Uruguay, and as the disclosure of information regarding the dictatorship continues.[17] These three recent narratives in which readers can observe mnemonic interventions contribute to an ongoing insistence on disclosure and investigation. For Uruguayans that do not have personal memories of the dictatorship and that learn about this period through mediated information, fictional narratives that cite the dictatorship by means of mnemonic interventions provide an accessible space for memory and awareness. This is not to say that the interventions will provide readers with personal memories if they do not already have them, as this is an impossible endeavor. Rather, the interventions contribute to a mnemonic register, to an evolving cultural memory, by imparting information, awareness, and fictionalized memories in the narratives. Mnemonic interventions bring readers into direct contact with the dictatorship. Perhaps readers of these narratives do not expect to come upon this kind of reference, as they might expect in a testimonial narrative. Perhaps readers may not know what "to do" with this reference, or mnemonic intervention, should they decide "to do" anything with it at all. The ways that readers respond to these narratives will vary according to their relationship to the dictatorship, and they will also have important implications for how they think about the dictatorship in the present, a constantly evolving process.

Since the return to democracy in Uruguay, there has been an ongoing debate regarding the ways that citizens remember and discuss the dictatorship in the public sphere. Some people concur with the need

for continued debates and inquiries about the dictatorship. They seek to maintain remembrance and awareness of the period, demanding the disclosure of classified information. They argue that it is not yet possible to relegate the dictatorship to the past (in the sense of Derrida's notion of hauntology as the past that is not and yet is there). Others are resolute in their appeals to leave discussions about the dictatorship behind. This polarization is especially relevant among younger Uruguayans born in the aftermath of the dictatorship, some of whom know little about this period. The narratives studied have a mnemonic utility: we can consider their social value in the ways that they provide a significant source of cultural memory. What is important is the presence of the mnemonic interventions in the narratives, as they offer a space for readers to engage, on some level, the dictatorship and its critical presence in contemporary life.

Notes

1. Many of the first post-dictatorship works published in the late 1980s and during the 1990s were based on the personal testimonies of first hand and secondary accounts of torture, and detention. I include only a few here: Fernando Butazzoni, *El tigre y la nieve* (Barcelona: Virus, 1986); Carlos Martínez Moreno, *El color que el infierno me escondiera* (Mexico: Nueva Imagen, 1981); Mauricio Rosencof, *Conversaciones con la alpargata* (Montevideo: Arca, 1985); Mauricio Rosencof and Fernández Huidobro, *Memorias de Calabazo* (Montevideo: Tae, 1987).

2. Former dictator Juan María Bordaberry and his chancellor Juan Carlos Blanco were tried and imprisoned in 2006, finally convicted for the deaths of politicians Zelmar Michelini and Héctor Gutiérrez Ruiz; as well as former *Tupamaros*, Rosario Barredo and William Whitelaw, who were all killed in Buenos Aires as part of Plan Condor. The *Tupamaros* [Tupamaro National Liberation Movement] was a guerilla organization in Uruguay in the late 1960s. Bordaberry served a short prison sentence (seventy-two days) beginning in November 2006, in Central Prison No. 10 in Montevideo, before he was permitted to move to his son's property in Carrasco (one of Montevideo's wealthiest suburbs) due to poor health conditions. Prior to this last conviction, eight former military and police officers active during the dictatorship were prosecuted in September 2005, and related to the disappearance of Adalberto Soba, another Uruguayan who was "disappeared" in Buenos Aires in 1976.

3. Under Article 4 of the Law of Impunity, investigating what happened to detained and disappeared Uruguayans in Argentina is allowed. Although it

is only since Tabaré Vásquez announced in 2005 that he intended to enforce Article 4 that these investigations have been under way. To date, this has permitted the re-examination of the case of the assassinations of Michelini, Gutiérrez Ruiz, and Soba in Buenos Aires. The incarceration of Bordaberry and Blanco in 2006 is one example of this category of investigation.

4. They secured the 600,000 signatures required to call a referendum in which citizens would be able to vote to annul or to ratify the Law.

5. The referendum was ratified with the Yellow vote, indefinitely preserving the Law of Impunity. There was an impressively high turnout of voters (84.7 percent), yet 56.6 percent ratified the Law of Impunity. In Montevideo, 56.6 percent of the voters voted Green against ratification, but it was not enough to carry the rest of the country. Historian Benjamin Nahum notes in *Breve historia del Uruguay independiente* (Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1999) that voters from the interior provinces—who had suffered less repression during the dictatorship than those living in Montevideo, and who greatly feared any kind of military backlash—overwhelming voted Yellow. Luis Roniger discusses the details of the Law of Impunity and the referendum in Luis Roniger, "Olvido, memoria colectiva e identidades: Uruguay en el contexto del Cono Sur," *La imposibilidad del olvido: Recorridos de la memoria en Argentina, Chile y Uruguay*, comp. Bruno Gruppo and Patricia Flier (La Plata: Ediciones al Margen, 2001) 151–78.

6. For example, the remains of communist militant Ubagesner Chaves Sosa were "found," identified, and buried in the Cemetery del Buceo in Montevideo in 2006. It should not be overlooked that recent developments and "new" information such as the "discovery," or acknowledgment, of human remains of a number of *desaparecidos* has caused a flurry of new investigations of the dictatorship period. In March 2006 human rights groups demanded the need to challenge the unconstitutionality of the Law of Impunity. This claim of unconstitutionality argues that it violates the republican principles of the separation of the three powers of State, giving the government the power to make the decisions regarding judicial cases of this nature. See "*Debate de ciernes: interpretativa de la Ley de Caducidad o su derogación,*" *La República* 1 March 2006.

7. Approximate numbers of disappeared persons suggest 210 in Uruguay, 30,000 in Argentina, and 11,000 in Chile.

8. "remain, *n.*" *The Oxford English Dictionary.* 2nd ed. 1989.

9. Translation is my own. Rico suggests that two of the effects that are resulting from the dynamics of social and political authoritarianism from 1967 to 1984 are: 1) the violation of human rights due to institutional impunity, which has affected the ways in which Uruguayans relate to each other and to the institutions in society; and 2) the effects of state terrorism and systematic torture, which has caused the devaluation of life and of the

integrity of the human body, where the devaluation and disintegration has moved to micro-social levels, private and intimate, affecting unprotected citizens most aversely.

10. "representation, *n.*" *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989.

11. "citation, *n.*" *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. Definitions include: 1) the written form of summons, or the document containing it; 2) a summons; 3) enumeration, recital, mention.

12. "summon, *v.*" *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989.

13. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

14. *Kiev*, written by Sergio Blanco and directed by Mario Ferreira is a more recent play about the dictatorship, performed in 2007 by the *Comedia Nacional* in Montevideo.

15. Areco was elected president in 1971 and implemented the beginnings of the political, economic, and social repression that was solidified with the *Golpe*.

16. An example of this kind of realistic representation is the intensely descriptive novel *El tigre y la nieve* (1985) by Fernando Butazzoni. This novel narrates the tragic story of a young Uruguayan woman who is kidnapped along with her political militant boyfriend in Argentina, taken to a detention camp in Córdoba, tortured, and freed only after assenting to a relationship with the camp's director. See Note 1 for more examples.

17. Two important political changes have been, Tabare Vásquez becoming the first leftist party *Frente Amplio* president and the recent decision to remunerate former political exiles as well as former political prisoners, who were imprisoned for a significant amount of years during the dictatorship. With regard to the disclosure of "new" information: When Uruguayans voted in the referendum in 1989, they did not know—as they now do—many details about the crimes committed by the military and police. For example, Uruguayans now know about the death flights operated by the Argentine and Uruguayan military, in which leftist, and citizens considered to be a "subversive" threat to the dictatorial regime were pushed to their death in the *Río de la Plata*. And they, also, now know about Plan Condor in which dictators from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay collaborated together, sharing intelligence in their efforts to rid their countries of the supposed dissident guerillas. Bordaberry and Blanco's recent imprisonment was the result of this "new" information. See Note 2.

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Sebald's Still Life Devices against Interpretations: An Explanation of *Austerlitz* through Cortázar's and Antonioni's Cameras

Nicola Gavioli
University of California, Santa Barbara

In order to be "historical," a photograph has to pass through the judgment of a community of interpreters. As it is typical for images, photographs show signs of inner, potential narratives contained inside them. Cortázar's short story "Las babas del diablo" (1959) focuses on this implicit and fluid potential for images to *produce* stories. If the intervention of an interpretative act determines the meaning of a particular picture as Cortázar's protagonist Roberto Michel exemplifies, in the case of the pictures of traumatic events such as the Holocaust their inclusion in the textbooks adopted to teach History at school—for being evaluated as especially representative of the event—depends on the authority of the gaze of the interpreters. Nevertheless, the attribution of authority is a debated point. In fact, a negationist discourse of collective tragedies periodically arises to put into question the veracity of the catastrophe of the Holocaust. In his short story, Cortázar reflects on the multiplicity of meanings that a photo contains. Roberto is able to choose *one* meaning only because he was physically present at the photographed event. In fact, external elements he remembers guide his interpretative gaze. The same happens in the movie *Blow-up* by Michelangelo Antonioni (1966), based on Cortázar's story, even though the question of the attribution of meaning to an image is seen in a different angle. In fact, for Antonioni, even the author of a photograph may have doubts about what really happened at the moment of taking a picture, regardless of the fact he was there. He too is presented as an unreliable authority. W. G. Sebald's posthumous novel *Austerlitz* (2001) is a book on Holocaust presenting numerous photographs on objects and places apparently unrelated to the tragic event. The aim of this article is to explain how

their presence in Sebald's book functions as a response to the problems of images as instruments of knowledge solicited in Cortázar's and Antonioni's works and as a device to control the production of interpretations.

The wanderings of two characters through contemporary Europe, their fortuitous Encounters, and the conversations they share in metropolitan surroundings are at the center of *Austerlitz*. The narrator, who is a middle-aged man without clear biographical background (we know he is a German professor and a researcher at a university), is not particularly interested in giving information about his past. On the contrary, his sketches of impressions on landscapes and people, his ruminative reflections, are at the core of his notes. In one of his visits to the city of Antwerp, he casually gets to know Austerlitz, an erudite academic who—as the readers soon discover—has forgotten the part of his early life that coincides with the Second World War. The acquaintanceship between the two men and their future encounters frame the narrative.

Austerlitz, following the pattern of other works written by Sebald, is a book that challenges the traditional classification of works of literature into genres. A novel *tout court*, a Holocaust historical novel, an essay (in literary form) on the functioning of mnemonic processes, are some of the possible labels we use to categorize this book. At first sight, readers notice that this book, so rich in descriptions of buildings and architectonic structures, is not organized according to a common literary "architecture" (divisions into parts, signaled by chapters and paragraphs). Even the diacritical marks distinguishing the voices of the various speakers of the text are absent. The impression is that of an almost uninterrupted wall of words, broken only in three points by asterisks and, towards the conclusion, by a blank space indicating the different times and locations of the encounters between the two main characters. This absence is significant, in the sense that, as is often the case in this book, what is missing is a continually evocated subject. The sense of "weight" of this text, the impenetrability it seems to suggest, is recalled in one observation made by the narrator, who visits the fortification of Antwerp and reflects that "the construction of fortification [. . .] clearly showed how we feel obliged to keep surrounding ourselves with defenses, built in successive phases as a precaution against any incursions by enemy powers" (Sebald 14). The assumption of the existence of "enemy powers," which could break

into and subvert the discourse, is directly connected to the almost continuous text of *Austerlitz*: a closed, visually impenetrable defensive stain of words, interrupted by numerous photographs inserted into the text. This iconographic choice is meant to explore the theoretic question of the use of images for the representation of a traumatic event, such as the Holocaust. Every piece of information Austerlitz recollects about himself is a result of a quest, his research through Europe, the consultation of documents, conversations with people who met him as a child, and finally, images that serve as illuminating keys for Austerlitz's personal memory.

If we consider the programmatic, systematic effort to dehumanize the prisoners at all levels and to completely erase the chance of transmission of information about what was actually taking place in the camps, the Holocaust can be seen as an *unicum* in the history of humanity. Based on this premise, the question that arises focuses on the possibility for the traditional narrative forms (novel, short story, biography, etc.) to transmit the singularity of the event. As Berel Lang affirms:

> [. . .] if there is a characteristically significant relation between the subject or occasion of representation [. . .] and the forms by which it is expressed, then it would follow that the identifying features of the Holocaust—what makes it distinctive historically and morally—would, and should also make a difference in the mode of representation. (5)

Contrary to the idea that the Holocaust is a subject that cannot be represented[1] but agreeing in what refers to the limits of traditional literary forms, Sebald chooses not only to write a composite book on this subject, but also to disseminate photographs in the text. The first image that appears (not surprisingly) in the *incipit* of *Austerlitz* is that of the eyes of the animals of the Antwerp Nocturama, a zoo visited by the narrator. Their gaze resembles those of inquiring men:

> [. . .] all I remember of the denizens of the Nocturama is that several of them had strikingly large eyes, and the fixed, inquiring gaze found in certain painters and philosophers who seek to penetrate the darkness which surrounds us purely by means of looking and thinking. (Sebald 4–5)

The photographs of animal and human eyes reclaim the attention of the reader in fixed, direct glances from the pages, which anticipate the centrality of the act of seeing and function as a memorandum. The following photographs in the book are neither ornamental nor ancillary but constitute the crucial point of the reflection.

The premise of my analysis is shaped by Hayden White's consideration of the historical text and its characteristics, comparable to those of the fictional narrative. Historical events, claims White in his essay "The Historical Text as a Literary Artifact,"

> [. . .] are *made* into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain of them and the highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation of tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like—in short, all the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play. (1715)

Tropes such as metaphor, metonym, synecdoche and irony are at work in both fictional and historical verbal artifacts. Nevertheless, White seems to underestimate the narrative potential of the images, the split between what people see in them and their original source, as he compares the history with other ways to capture the reality:

> [. . .] it is generally maintained—as Frye said—that a history is a verbal model of a set of events external to the mind of the historian. But it is wrong to think of a history as a model similar to a scale model of an airplane or ship, a map, or a photograph. (1718)

White seems to oversimplify the relationship between reality and photograph, as if the latter was an objective, pure copy of what is seen, ignoring the particular selective gaze of the photographer in the moment of taking it. Also, he does not take into consideration photographs documenting past events that we cannot reach "by going and looking at the original" (White 1718). Contrary to White's argument, photographs are always the result of a selection of elements to assemble in a delimited frame. In addition to that, photographs deal with ephemeral, the instantaneous, and the volatile, which is

consequently not verifiable in an empirical way. To affirm that pictures are transparent is to ignore both the photographer's working gaze and the individual readings made by any person who looks at them. All these conditions open doors to a variety of possibilities in the act of producing, seeing and interpreting images. As seen in Cortázar's story "Las babas del diablo," the picture is the product of a choice but this choice is not under the complete control of the photographer. In fact, he is not alone in his act of taking photographs. The camera itself is a subject that influences the gaze of the photographer because it forces him to look for singularity and meanings in the landscape. The protagonist of the story, Roberto Michelet, a translator and photographer who lives in Paris, notices that "[. . .] cuando se anda con la cámara hay como el deber de estar atento [. . .] pensar fotográficamente las escenas" and adds that "el fotógrafo opera siempre como una permutación de su manera personal de ver el mundo por otra que la cámara le impone insidiosa" (Cortázar 81). In other terms, the photographer needs to find exceptional conditions in order to justify the shot and Roberto's imagination works to satisfy that need. When he is casually the spectator of the encounter between a boy and a more mature woman in the streets of the Quai d'Anjou, he immediately starts constructing biographies and plots around them:

> Lo que había tomado por una pareja se parecía más a un chico con su madre, aunque al mismo tiempo me daba cuenta de que no era un chico con su madre, de que era una pareja en el sentido que damos siempre a las parejas cuando las vemos apoyadas en los parapetos o abrazadas en los bancos de las plazas. (Cortázar 82)

Different versions arise but all of them are curious enough to deserve a picture. The reaction of the woman who has noticed Roberto's shot is aggressive. She asks for the roll of the camera because he did not have the right to take that photograph. Another man getting out of a car seems nervous. He joins the woman and reclaims the roll, while the boy runs away. Roberto decides to keep the picture he made and, some days later, he finally develops the photograph. The image, enlarged and fixed on a wall, starts making sense only through the reminiscence of the day of the encounter. The exaggerated reactions of the two adults explain it. Roberto now "sees" a woman trying to

seduce a boy in order to bring him to the man in the car. To have been physically present is decisive for the understanding of what *really* happened (according to Roberto's interpretative decision). The photograph would not be able to speak alone. The picture of the story is not a mute simulacrum of reality, because it potentially *could* produce many stories. Nevertheless, it is a too small window to perceive the real motifs, the profound level of causality that explains the encounter between the boy and the woman. Still, a question remains: does Roberto have a privileged understanding of the facts only because he was *there*? Is firsthand witnessing a sufficient condition to legitimate Roberto's vision?

Inspired by Cortázar's short story, Michelangelo Antonioni directs *Blow-up*, a movie that underlines even more the inherent ambiguity of pictures due to both the limits and creativeness of perception. As the Italian critic Aldo Tassone suggests, the similarities between the short story and the movie are reduced. What they really have in common is more a "clima spirituale" (Tassone 143) than the details of the plot. In this case, the protagonist, Thomas, is a fashion photographer working in the London of the 1960s. In a fundamental scene of the movie—the one that more resembles Cortázar's story—Thomas is wandering in a park with his camera looking for new subjects: he decides to follow a couple of adults, who act like lovers, and takes some shots of them. The pictures contain the entire landscape that surrounds the couple. When the woman realizes what Thomas is doing, she immediately runs to reclaim for the roll while Thomas continues taking other pictures. Needless to say, he refuses to sell his roll, and becomes even more curious about the mystery the photos might contain. Some days later, scanning the particulars of the pictures, he believes to have witnessed the murder of a man. Hidden behind plants, a killer points a gun towards the couple. Another image, taken before the discussion with the woman, shows a little stain behind a bush: the corpse of the man, according to Thomas's view. All seems to confirm that something exceptional actually took place. In fact, unknown people start following Thomas in the city and, surprisingly, the woman of the park finds his place in order to ask him one more time for the roll. One night, the photographer returns to the park, sees and touches the corpse—which significantly has its eyes wide-open. The centrality of the act of seeing is affirmed again, but the morning after there are no more traces of it, not even marks of its presence on the ground. All of a sudden, a

group of clowns arrives: they enter the tennis court and perfectly simulate a game without the use of rackets and balls. Spectator to all this, Thomas starts to "hear" the typical sounds of a tennis game, as if it is really taking place. The final scene implicitly questions the reliability of the senses, susceptible to be guided by a will or confounded by illusions in the act of reading the signs of the world.

The comparison between Cortázar's short story and *Blow-up* reveals some significant difference. The comparison between photography and literary translation in "Las babas del diablo" is replaced in Antonioni's movie by the similarities between photography and the art of painting. One of the characters of the movie is an abstract expressionist painter who explains to Thomas his creative process. What he sees in his work in progress canvas is a "mess," a confusion of colors and segments. Then, progressively, his gaze isolates an element that becomes the "clue" for the understanding of the image, similarly to the reconstruction of a crime in a detective novel. When Thomas shows one of the photographs he took in the park to the painter's wife, she comments: "it looks like one of those paintings," but she cannot distinguish anything in the black and white "mess" of the image. Another difference between the short story and the movie regards the question on the capacity of the photos to explain what the main character witnesses. Cortázar's story shows that the reactions of the woman and the man in the car are fundamental to interpreting the scene captured in the photo, while in the movie all the essential elements are included in the image itself. The continuous interaction Thomas has with the protagonists of his photos and other unknown presences (only punctual in the short story, totally concentrated in Roberto's impressions and solipsistic elaboration a posteriori) confirms his belief in the importance of what the pictures show. The pictures *contain* the story in its entirety; cause and effect are *included* inside them. The examples from Cortázar and Antonioni develop a reflection on gnoseology through the materiality of a fixed image, each questioning different but interrelated aspects of the act of seeing and understanding: the physical presence as a fundamental factor in interpreting an image (Cortázar), and the relative purity and independence of the gaze from the impressions generated by external solicitations or by the imagination of the photographer (Antonioni).

The problem of the potentially uncontrolled narrative interpretation of the images, due to the absence of an internal device in them

that delimits the production of significance, is decisive when we approach historical photographs. The adjective "historical," obviously applicable in a larger sense to any human product, refers here to a specific category of photographs, those that depict episodes, minor or crucial events included in the official History. Before appearing in the textbooks used to teach past events at school and at university, every historical picture passes through a process of selection and is connoted with a particular, official meaning. These pictures receive and carry a crystallized significance. Nevertheless, the role of the testimonies made by the authors of the photos or by participants of the event is often crucial in conferring credibility and legitimacy to the images.

Through the character of Roberto Michel, Cortázar demands that the readers consider the same question: if, for even the author of the photographs, there is an interval between the simple observation of an image and the attribution of a meaning, how can we isolate the event, which is actually taking place from other forms of reading, in which the imagination intervenes? With respect to this, Cortázar adds that "Michel es cupable de literatura, de fabricaciones irreales. Nada le gusta más que imaginar excepciones, individuos fuera de la especie" (89). It is at this point that Sebald's work turns to be significant, confronting the implicit polysemy of the images with a proposal that aims to control it. The numerous photographs inserted in the text of *Austerlitz* are not made by the same camera. The paternity of them is not explicitly declared but some may be attributed to the homonymous protagonist, due to the link they establish with Austerlitz's first person narrative. Others are relics from the past: figures in an old village, daguerrotypes of landscapes, objects (a clock, a backpack, shelves of books), interiors (a ladder, a table), a series of fragments of memory, which accompany the progressive reconstruction of Austerlitz's previous life.

The first pages of the book introduce the theme of the Holocaust, although the narrator did not have a direct experience of that event.[2] The principle of an indirect *liaison* between the objects photographed and the past they evoke is never broken. No single page of the book presents a photo that documents the effects of the atrocities committed in the concentration camp. Nevertheless, two images "talk" openly of death: the first shows three skulls, a particular of a large mound of skeletons found below Broad Street Station in London in 1865. The reference to mysterious reasons that guide

Austerlitz toward the place of the burial seems particularly important because the readers are induced to notice that the skulls of the previous inhabitants of London must have a correlation with other skulls—other dead of history—according to the intentions of the book. And in fact, the second direct references to death are images of the cemetery of an Azkenazi Jewish community in London (followed some pages later by photos of the Tower Hamlets cemetery). It has been noticed that "the photograph of cemetery which recur through [. . .] *Austerliz* signify that the lives of the protagonists are constantly shadowed by death and the Holocaust" (Whitehead 127), and that "the lack of boundaries and definitions in this universe of disintegration is repeated in the attempt to abolish the boundaries between the living and the dead—or rather, to make the dead part of the present" (Schlant 232). The pictures of the skeletons and of the cemetery seem particularly helpful to clarify the metonymic value of the collection of images of the book. In fact, a few skulls and a group of headstones are potentially able to recall, functioning as synecdoches, the catastrophe of Holocaust. Nevertheless, alone, they are imprecise in their evocative potentiality. In fact, they can refer to any war, any violence, any dead. To make them speak about the Holocaust, it is necessary to read the text that accompanies them. In other terms, the pictures are not autonomous in *Austerlitz*: they are inextricably linked to the words and to the totality of the other metonymic photographs collected.

Comparing the selection of photographs Sebald decided to insert in *Austerlitz*, it is observable the (apparently) digressive nature of them which reflects the wandering thoughts of Austerlitz.[3] The function of these pictures seems to obey the author's will to postpone the actual theme of the narration. This is true until the middle of the book, where Austerlitz visits the Liverpool Street Station. The digression device—for reasons of completeness in the act of communicating a scene or event—is necessary, because it depicts mnemonic processes based on a "step by step" uncovering of truth. In this sense, we could find in "Las babas del diablo" a comment on what is insisted in the entirety of Sebald's novel: to recount accurately is probably not possible, but the ramblings of thought give at least an idea of the digressive nature of memory itself. Also, how the selection of elements to write about is mimetically problematic and open to variations:

> Vamos a contarlo despacio, ya se irá viendo qué ocurre en medida que lo escribo. Si me sustituyen, si ya no sé qué decir, si se acaban las nubes y empieza alguna otra cosa (porque no puede ser que esto sea estar viendo continuamente nubes que pasan, y unas veces una paloma), si algo de todo eso [. . .] (Cortázar 79)

More than that, memory is *in general* a tricky instrument for knowledge as suggested by Sebald:

> People make up myths about themselves and they stick very closely to those stories that they have once "written" in their own minds. (qtd. in Bigsby 51–52)

If memory is not always a reliable instrument of the accuracy of the facts that happened, it could be attacked and negated as well by revisionist points of views: another irresoluble aspect of the labyrinthine problem of testimony.

As the narration progressively focuses on Austerlitz's search for documents on his past in Prague (the confirmation of what personal memories suggest), the photographs as well become more personal, more intimately linked to the life of the protagonist: the house where he lived with his parents before his escape to England and his photo as a child. In visiting the city of Terezín nearby Prague, one of the places that appear in the map of the concentration camps, Austerlitz decides to enter the Ghetto Museum. It is fundamental at this point to notice that no photo of the museum is shown. No original document, nothing that might potentially reveal the nude reality of the camp is offered to the gaze of the readers: a long interval of words without images follows. This absence (in this particular moment and place of the story) illuminates the meaning of Sebald's work and the particular role of photographs in *Austerlitz*. If the images contain a variety of presences, figures, interactions between subjects, they are particularly exposed to be read as narrative. This is exactly what happens in Cortázar's "Las babas del diablo," where the presence of a small group of human actors in the pictures implies the possibility of different readings of the images.

Contrary to the examples chosen by Cortázar and Antonioni, Sebald finds a solution to control the production of significance of

the images by inserting photos that are almost impermeable to the construction of stories: isolated human beings, objects, architectures, elements of nature. In other words, the photos tend to be as *narrative-free* as possible.[4] Moreover, as previously noted, they are completely dependent on the text that surrounds them in order to result comprehensible. Sebald is completely conscious of the danger of falsification that a picture of the Holocaust can generate for reasons related both to the problem of authority, i.e. the question of the "purity" of the gaze of the photographer, questioned in *Blow-up*, which can be susceptible to the attacks of Holocaust negationists, and to the exposure of different readings by people who were not there, such an important condition for understanding, according to Roberto Michel in "Las babas del diablo." The declared vulnerability of Sebald's writings is even more accentuated by the fact that this writer cannot in any case exercise the function of an authority because, exactly as his protagonist, he did not go through the experience of the Holocaust. The photos have to be as indirect as his experience was. The black and white color that characterizes them underlines the foggy mental dimension of the narrative:

> In my photographic work I was especially entranced, said Austerlitz, by the moment when the shadows of reality, so to speak, emerge out of nothing on the exposed paper, as memories do in the middle of the night, darkening again if you try to cling on them, just like a photographic print left in the developing bath too long. (Cortázar 77)

According to Giorgio Agamben, this opacity of impressions is discernible in those works of literature that focus on the mnemonic processes and the loss of the experience as their main themes of reflection. His example is centered on Proust, who "sembra [. . .] avere in mente certi stati crepuscolari, come il dormiveglia o la perdita di coscienza: 'je ne savais pas au premier instant qui j'étais' è la sua formula tipica"[5] (39), comparable to Austerlitz's numerous opaque reminiscences and Roberto's wandering thoughts.

"Las babas del diablo," *Blow-up*, and *Austerlitz* reflect on the problem of the transmission of knowledge through images. It may be pointed out that Sebald does not really find a solution to the potentially uncontrolled narratives that originate from a photograph. In

fact, to affirm the neutrality of a photo means to oversimplify the question: any picture, from the expression of a face to the fragment of an object can produce narratives. The effectiveness of Sebald's solution is not defended in this article. What seems relevant is the consciousness that *Austerlitz* shows about the problems of the nature of photographs that Cortázar and Antonioni indicated in their works, particularly the *impasse* that a picture, by nature an open work subjected to different interpretations but intended to testify and to communicate *one* particular meaning, can provoke. The inner mechanism of *Austerlitz* and Sebald's choice of pictures confronts the theme of the Holocaust with a complete awareness of the current debate on the limits of art and a will to expand them through a theoretical, fictional, though essay-like, challenge.

Notes

1. As Berel Lang appoints in his essay *Holocaust Representation*, "it has become almost a matter of course that writings about the Holocaust should allude—often in their titles, but if not there, in the texts—to the 'incomprehensibility,' the 'unspeakability,' or 'ineffability,' and so, even more cumbersomely, the 'unwritability,' of the Holocaust as a subject" (Lang 17). Nevertheless, the author notices, "in these very discourses the 'incomprehensible' is explained (at least the effort is made), the 'unspeakable' and the 'ineffable' are pretty clearly spoken (or spoken about), and the 'unwritable' is written" (17). This matter of fact that Lang describes as a contemporary use of figure of speech of the *praeteritio*, is confirmed by the abundant literary, cinematographic, artistic (*sensu lato*) production that every year presents the Holocaust as a central theme. It seems to me that the controversial point does not especially focus (anymore) on the possibility itself to talk about that historical event. The question of the legitimacy of writers and artists who did not experience directly the Holocaust in order to represent it and the authority of the witnesses who did not obviously go through the entire experience of the others, the so called *Muslims* (the term indicating the people in the concentration camps who had supposedly lost the perception of being human and who already had the appearance of dead), are amply discussed problematic points. However, the forms in which to present the Holocaust and the risks of divulging a too imprecise representation of the tragedy through them are also crucial points of the contemporary critical debate. Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1977), for instance, tells the history of the invasion of Poland by Nazi forces and the struggle of a Jewish family to survive through

the forms of comics. The physical characterization of the protagonists is taken from the animal world: the Jews are represented as mice, the Germans as cats and the Polish people (being collaborators of the Nazis) as pigs. What is precisely hard for the reader is to accept this graphical choice (which, among other aspects, frees the anthropomorphic representation of animals from the restricted entertaining use made by Disney and other cartoonists) where mimicry is partially substituted by a gallery of a not-human figures but preserved in the depiction of the places where the facts of the story occurred. Beyond this challenging format, *Maus* follows the traces of other narratives of the Holocaust (those by Primo Levi, Imre Kértesz, Elie Wiesel, among the others) on underlying the importance of the witness, the survivor, whose voice has not only to be transcribed, but fixed in a tape-recorder as well (in fact all the story of the book is based on the memories of an old man who talks to his son, a cartoonist). The drawings and their potential of transmission of knowledge carry the responsibility of the testimonial speech.

2. In Antwerp, the narrator of *Austerlitz* visits the Breendonk fortress that was made into a German reception and penal camp during World War II and, commenting on the link between objects and history, implicitly suggests a declaration of *ars poetica* for the understanding of the book itself: "Even now [. . .] when I look back at the crab-like plan of Breendonk and read the words of the captions—*Former Office*, *Printing Works*, *Huts*, *Jacques Ochs Hall*, *Solitary Confinement Cell*, *Mortuary*, *Relics Store*, and *Museum*—the darkness does not lift but becomes yet heavier as I think how little we can hold in mind, how everything is constantly lapsing into oblivion with every extinguished life, how the world is, as it were, draining itself, in that the history of countless places and objects which themselves have no power of memory is never heard, never described or passed on. Histories, for instance, like those of the straw mattresses [. . .] and now, in writing this, I do remember that such an idea occurred to me at the time—as if they were the mortal frames of those who lay there in that darkness" (24).

3. In an article appeared in the "Times Literary Supplement" on February 25, 2000, Susan Sontag expressed her admiration for Sebald and reflected on the reasons for the presence of apparently insignificant pictures in his works. She found in them the "imperfections of relics," although she does not particularly clarify the qualities of these "imperfections."

4. The characteristic of neutrality that the photos show could also be read as a result of a search for a total image in the sense expressed in Italo Calvino's short story "The Adventure of a Photographer," where a man tries to immortalize a girl named Bice in her entirety: "There were many possible photographs of Bice and many Bices impossible to photograph, but what he was seeing was the unique photograph that would contain both the former and the latter" (228). The impossible task is not abandoned but, instead of

searching for an impossible exceptional synthesis, he concludes: "Perhaps true, total photography, he thought, is a pile of fragment of private images, against the creased background of massacres and coronations" (235). In Sebald's work, readers find a collection of "private images" supported by a narrative that gives them a meaning they could not show by themselves.

5. Giorgio Agamben: "[. . .] he seems [. . .] to have in mind certain crepuscular states of consciousness, like the drowsiness or the loss of consciousness: 'je ne savais pas au premier instant qui j'étais' is his typical formula" (39). (*my translation from Italian*)

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O "modernizador dos sertões:" intelectuais brasileiros e as memórias de Delmiro Gouveia

Dilton Cândido Santos Maynard
Universidade Estadual de Alagoas

Este trabalho trata de construções e reconstruções da memória. A partir da análise de alguns escritos sobre Delmiro Gouveia, agroindustrial nordestino conhecido por diversos epítetos, como "rei das peles," "modernizador do sertão" e "coronel dos coronéis," analiso como ele aparece, de modo inconstante, nos debates sobre os rumos do Nordeste brasileiro. Após uma morte trágica, este personagem foi envolvido em narrativas sobre a modernização dos sertões e, em diferentes momentos, apontado como um mártir. Ao discutirem os motivos que justificariam o "atraso" das terras do "norte" brasileiro—permeadas pelo messianismo, pela seca, pela violência—diversos intelectuais enxergaram em Delmiro o exemplo redentor a ser seguido. Mário de Andrade, Gilberto Freyre, Assis Chateaubriand, Oliveira Lima e Graciliano Ramos são os intelectuais considerados para as reflexões aqui presentes. Seguindo alguns dos seus escritos, sobretudo as crônicas, observo como se constituiu um núcleo a partir do qual a memória de Delmiro Gouveia tem sido constantemente remexida, ainda que permaneça nela a constante do "mártir civilizador."

Começo por uma crônica de Graciliano Ramos (1892–1953), denominada "A propósito da seca," escrita nos anos 30. Nela o autor avaliava as possíveis relações entre as secas no Nordeste e o parco desenvolvimento da economia regional. Segundo ele, o cidadão estrangeiro que não tivesse informações sobre o Brasil, que desconhecesse o país e lesse "um dos livros que a nossa literatura referente à seca tem produzido, literatura já bem vasta, graças a Deus, imaginaria que aquela parte da terra que vai da serra Ibiapaba a Sergipe, é deserta, uma espécie de Saara." Como outros literatos e jornalistas, o autor não disfarça o descontentamento com as impressões negativas que a região transmitia. Atribuía isto ao trabalho dos ficcionistas do século XIX e criticava o

enfoque demasiado conferido à seca, em detrimento de outros fatores de penúria local: "certamente há demasiada miséria no sertão, como em toda a parte, mas não é indispensável que a chuva falte para que o camponês se desfaça dos filhos inúteis." A seca, continua Ramos, "é apenas uma das causas da fome" ("A propósito da seca" 132).

O desconforto com o tema, com a idéia de um espaço de miséria e atraso econômico, inspirou letrados em defesas sobre as potencialidades da região. No século XX, esforço semelhante é percebido na construção de representações "positivas" para o Nordeste e seus habitantes,[1] através de crônicas, contos e romances que produziram alguns símbolos e heróis destinados a responder afirmativamente ao chamado dos "tempos modernos." Um destes ícones indubitavelmente foi o Coronel Delmiro Gouveia. Uma visita a certas produções literárias do século XX evidencia a existência de referências que influenciaram diretamente na elaboração da memória deste personagem como um mártir, algo depois solidificado a partir de eventos celebrativos ligados ao seu centenário de nascimento. De início, porém, é conveniente uma breve apresentação do personagem que se tornou o centro das atenções de tantos intelectuais.

Nascido em 1863, em Ipú (CE), criado no Recife, Delmiro Augusto da Cruz Gouveia era, conforme um dos seus mais conhecidos biógrafos, "fisicamente forte, corpo cheio, notadamente o tronco, mas bem proporcionado, com a estatura de mais ou menos 1,75 metro, um tanto elevada, para o comum dos nortistas" (Martins 92). Órfão de pai e, após a morte da mãe, em 1875, ocupou diversos empregos: foi aprendiz de tipógrafo, auxiliar numa mercearia, despachante de barcaças, funcionário da Brazilian Street Railways, caixeiro viajante. Trabalhando na Levi & Cia, exportadora de couros, Gouveia negociou com comerciantes norte-americanos. Em meio aos negócios aprendeu a manejar algo do inglês e do francês. Após certo tempo, viajou a Nova York e de lá voltou como único responsável pela exportação de peles no Nordeste. O sucesso nos negócios lhe rendeu fortuna e o apelido de "Rei das Peles." Com o dinheiro obtido na venda de couros, Gouveia diversificou seus investimentos e estabeleceu duas outras grandes empreitadas: a Usina Beltrão (pioneira no fabrico de açúcar em tabletes) e o Mercado Coelho e Cintra, o Mercado do Derby, este último considerado o primeiro supermercado do Brasil. O Derby chamou atenção da imprensa recifense porque, se durante o dia abrigava pontos comerciais com produtos mais baratos, à noite

era um espaço dedicado à diversão, dotado de velódromo e iluminação elétrica. Conhecido como "O Derby de Delmiro," o mercado foi lembrado por um contemporâneo da seguinte maneira: "Qual foi o empenho do Coronel Delmiro em emprehender tão importante obra? Abrilhantar a cidade, proporcionar commodos a mais de 100 famílias, melhorar a vida do pobre" (Freyre, *O Velho Félix* 121).

Além de impressionar por sua proposta arrojada para o Derby, Gouveia transformou a sua residência, a "Vila Anunciada" (assim batizada em homenagem à sua primeira esposa), num espaço para grandes festas e saraus. Mesmo sem vir de família tradicional, ele tornou-se Presidente da Associação Comercial de Pernambuco. O também cearense ditou moda com os "colarinhos Delmiro Gouveia," um jeito de vestir que ele parece ter inaugurado no Recife. A fama de negociante próspero logo foi acompanhada pela de galanteador. Delmiro enviava rosas e bilhetinhos apaixonados às amantes.

Porém, intrigas políticas e o incêndio—ao que tudo indica—criminoso do Derby, em 1900, a falência que decretou, além da ameaça de prisão pelo rapto da neta do desembargador e ex-governador de Pernambuco Sigismundo Gonçalves, Carmela Eulina do Amaral Gusmão, moça por quem se apaixonou, na época ainda menor de idade, levaram Delmiro a fugir, em 1902, para o sertão alagoano, região na qual possuía aliados de certa influência política. Ali, fixou-se na Vila da Pedra.

Do vilarejo Delmiro restabeleceu seus contatos comerciais, obteve subsídios estatais, empréstimos bancários e, em pouco tempo, reergueu sua fortuna. Num curto intervalo, Gouveia fundou nova firma (a IONA & Cia, com sede em Maceió) e ordenou a construção da usina hidrelétrica de Angiquinho—primeira experiência deste tipo no Baixo São Francisco, através da cachoeira de Paulo Afonso. Com a energia obtida, pôde então criar a Companhia Agro-Fabril Mercantil (CAM), experiência inédita no Brasil com linhas de costura. Implantou uma Vila Operária, na qual habitavam milhares de trabalhadores, gente que se via obrigada a seguir rígidos ditames sobre horários, moral e bons costumes. Ali, na noite de 10 de outubro 1917, enquanto lia jornais na varanda do seu chalé, Delmiro foi morto com dois tiros. Após a prisão, poucos dias após o crime, três sertanejos foram obrigados, depois de muita tortura, a confessar o crime, e o caso foi dado como encerrado. No ar, ficou a suspeita de que o assassinato fora encomendado por pessoas ligadas ao grupo inglês da "Machine

Cotton," *trust* que, naqueles dias, realizava férrea campanha para comprar a fábrica de Delmiro e retomar o monopólio no negócio de linhas. Delmiro negava-se a vender a Companhia que, anos após a sua morte, foi finalmente adquirida pelos britânicos. Os novos donos chocaram a população da Pedra. Ocorre que diversas máquinas da CAM foram quebradas e jogadas no leito do rio São Francisco. E, a partir daí, conforme o já citado Graciliano Ramos, "um profundo esquecimento cobriu Gouveia" ("Recordações" 116).

Acompanhando esta idéia de um eclipse na memória de Gouveia, lançada não apenas por Graciliano, diversos intelectuais se empenharam em transformá-lo num "mártir." É importante observar que antes do escritor alagoano, outros já haviam mencionado acontecimentos da vida de Delmiro, considerado-o um desbravador a ser celebrado. Ainda nos anos 10, Oliveira Lima e Assis Chateaubriand, intelectuais conhecidos e influentes, escreveram sobre Delmiro, classificando-o como um contraponto ao sertanejo imerso no atraso, no fanatismo religioso e na violência. A diferença entre estes dois e Graciliano está, entre outras coisas, no fato de que eles produziram reflexões sobre alguém a quem conheceram pessoalmente. Num texto de setembro de 1917, escrito em Parnamirim (PE), dias após a visita que fizera à Pedra, Oliveira Lima, o "Dom Quixote Gordo," registrou suas impressões sobre Gouveia e as intervenções por ele comandadas. Suas memórias sobre a excursão estão recheadas de elogios ao anfitrião e de admiração pelas mudanças sofridas na paisagem sertaneja.

Oliveira Lima, então diplomata aposentado, elogia inicialmente o pioneirismo de Delmiro escrevendo: "À rara iniciativa de um patrício nosso cabem a honra e o mérito de ter iniciado o aproveitamento dessa fonte excepcional de energia e progresso industrial" (427). Conforme Lima, Gouveia teria agido sozinho e sem excessos, dando mostras dos méritos da iniciativa particular. A sua descrição do vilarejo ressoará em trabalhos de outros narradores da vida de Delmiro, textos que manterão um fértil diálogo com uma tradição interpretativa que o ex-diplomata ajudou a estabelecer:

> Na vila operária reinam a ordem, o asseio e pode-se dizer o conforto (sic). As casas são todas iguais para se notar diferença nas posses dos que as ocupam. Cada quarteirão é ligado por um alpendre corrido, e cada habitação se compõe de quatro aposentos: salinha de frente, quarto de

> dormir, salinha de trás para as refeições e cozinha. A mobília varia segundo os haveres dos moradores. Nalgumas casas vi mobílias austríacas; noutras apenas uma mesa, escabel e baús. Em todas ou quase todas uma máquina de costura. (430)

A disciplina e as preocupações com a higiene e a saúde causaram impacto no embaixador. Diferente de outros lugares, ali havia um médico, certo "Dr. Maciel," que "vence 1 conto de réis por mês e tem ordem de não poupar despesas para curar qualquer operário da fábrica." O espanto de Oliveira Lima continua quando ele constata a existência de cirurgião-dentista e alfaiates: "Não vi, quer nas oficinas, quer nas ruas, um homem descalço ou de chinelos, uma mulher desgrenhada ou de dentes sujos." Indubitavelmente os olhos de Oliveira Lima leram a Pedra através de um prisma europeu. E justamente por conta desta referência, ele sentencia: "Não é em todos os países da Europa, somente naqueles de proverbial asseio e boa ordem, que poderemos deparar com espetáculo igual" (431).

Conforme o pensador pernambucano, a vila da Pedra era um cadinho de culturas manejado com maestria por Delmiro Gouveia. Tais descrições da Pedra como um "cadinho" e um edifício moral ou ainda como "um simples que é tudo" não cairão no vazio. Posteriormente transformado numa das referências para a descrição sobre a Pedra, Oliveira Lima imprimiu a concepção de que ali no sertão nordestino, mesmo em tempos de guerra, vigorava uma mistura harmoniosa de outras nacionalidades, sobretudo européias, que se fundiam nos empreendimentos de Gouveia:

> O sócio do coronel Delmiro é um italiano de Trieste; italiano é um engenheiro principal da usina elétrica, que tem sob suas ordens um chefe de máquinas alemão e um empreiteiro português; o gerente técnico da fábrica é inglês, o eletricista suíço-alemão, o mestre de tinturaria inglês que praticou na Alemanha. O espetáculo é uma miniatura do Brasil como deve de ser e tem de ser, um Brasil sem ódios de raça, nem de nacionalidade, nem de política, um Brasil cadinho de todos os povos e campo de trabalho para todas as capacidades. (435)

Seguindo de perto a tendência dos seus dias, Oliveira Lima enxerga em Londres o centro civilizatório a ser emulado. E a vila não parece longe de atingir tal objetivo. Afinal de contas, ele escreve, ali "os princípios de boa educação abrem brecha nos usos mais enraizados: nenhum dos empregados come com os dedos e raros são os que levam a faca à boca. Quase todos comem com o garfo, como a gente fina." O "Dom Quixote" não consegue esconder a empolgação ao registrar: "É gente essa que também toma chá e talvez o prefira ao café: nos armazéns vi pilhas de latas de chá Lipton. Parece Londres em pleno sertão" (431).

Operários que tomam chá. A força da imagem lançada pelo ex-diplomata surpreende, se observarmos que ele concebe o produto (Lipton) como um índice civilizador (e havia pilhas de chá na Pedra), afastando os sertanejos de uma bebida aparentemente mais comum ao hábito nacional—o café. Assim, através das palavras de Oliveira Lima surge a Pedra, espécie de Londres sertaneja a se contrapor, nos corredores da imaginação, ao mundo de violência e messianismo que predominava nas representações sobre o sertão. Delmiro Gouveia permitia a Oliveira projetar um outro tipo de mundo sertanejo, um lugar livre do cangaço, da jagunçada e dos beatos. "Aos que só imaginam essa região povoada de jagunços e cangaceiros criminosos, ele [Delmiro] mostra que aqueles elementos de desordem podem ser aproveitados e transformados em elementos de cultura." Para tanto, era preciso apenas que o sertanejo fosse tratado "um pouco como criança, mercê de sua ignorância, um pouco como adulto, mercê da sua natural agudeza" (437). Tomando os domínios de Gouveia como espaço modelo, Oliveira Lima escreveu: "O mais interessante é que esse espetáculo se nos oferece a 40 léguas de Canudos e a 70 do Juazeiro do Padre Cícero" (437). Tal qual Canudos e Conselheiro, Juazeiro e Padre Cícero se tornaram termos próximos à barbárie no sertão.[2] As lutas políticas e o fervor religioso capitaneado pelo clérigo alimentaram muitos dos intérpretes da região que, com exemplos tão "negativos," parecia destinada a um contínuo atraso. Porém, observa Lima, Pedra não está distante destes lugares. Sendo assim, o que explicaria, em zonas tão próximas, respostas tão dessemelhantes? Ora, para Lima, Gouveia teria procedido "[. . .] com um tino, um senso psicológico, um espírito de tolerância e de penetração de que infelizmente não deram prova nossos governantes ao lidarem com o caso de Canudos." Todavia, o ex-diplomata, que não escondia a sua

simpatia pelo monarquismo, atribuiu às autoridades republicanas a responsabilidade pelas mortes no sertão baiano. Enquanto Gouveia combateu o fanatismo com trabalho, arquitetando um povoado que em certos aspectos acabava "fazendo lembrar as cidades alemãs," as autoridades brasileiras "liquidaram pela brutalidade e pela crueldade" ao povo de Canudos, "quando esse incidente de patologia social apenas requeria moderação e brandura" (Lima 433–4).

Portanto, é com otimismo que Oliveira Lima analisa a obra civilizadora de Delmiro Gouveia. Iniciativas como as existentes em Pedra mereciam elogios, pois ajudavam a colocar o país nas trilhas do desenvolvimento, promoviam a modernização de uma nação que buscava o progresso. Os problemas que ela apresentava seriam sanados com o tempo. As intervenções levadas a cabo por Gouveia promoveriam um vigoroso processo de conscientização política entre os sertanejos. Tal conscientização atingiria tanto as elites rurais quanto os camponeses. O primeiro grupo, do qual Gouveia parece ser um representante exemplar na ótica de Lima, agiria de maneira mais cordial, preocupando-se com a educação das massas. Os camponeses, adquirindo novos hábitos, se tornariam em pouco tempo cidadãos melhores, educados, civilizados. O mais importante, aos seus olhos, era ver no interior do Brasil, nos sertões, uma cidade onde embora ainda não existisse uma Igreja, já havia banheiros exclusivos para homens e mulheres.

Ao que tudo indica, o que ocorreu nestes tempos configura uma memória ainda desarticulada, presente em menções, em textos isolados, em ecos sem grande força. O "rei das peles" era lembrado, mas de forma ocasional, bissexta. Porém, nos anos de 1960, na esteira das comemorações pelo centenário de nascimento do comerciante cearense, uma série de trabalhos biográficos aparecerá. Através destas obras Delmiro foi tomado para contradizer a idéia do Nordeste de arcaico e de insignificância no desenvolvimento nacional. Ao mesmo tempo, foi citado como exemplo nos debates sobre a industrialização no sertão. Portanto, é possível dizer que a emergência de Gouveia como um "disciplinador de homens" antecede a tais elogios biográficos. Precedido por referências esparsas de intelectuais do porte de Oliveira Lima e Graciliano Ramos, o projeto de reconstrução da memória de Delmiro rompeu as fronteiras regionais graças, entre outras coisas, a uma vigorosa contribuição de inúmeros letrados. E, ao contrário do que escreveu o autor de *Vidas Secas*, não parece ter havido um esquecimento tão agudo em torno de Delmiro Gouveia. Vejamos.

Conhecido como o homem que introduziu a luz elétrica e o automóvel no Sertão, Delmiro foi elogiado pelos jornais já nos dias seguintes à sua morte. O assassinato, noticiado em grandes periódicos como o *Jornal do Commercio* e *Revista da Semana*,[3] motivou palestra do médico Plínio Cavalcanti na Sociedade Nacional de Agricultura no Rio de Janeiro, ainda em outubro de 1917. Depois, nos anos 20, sua morte foi uma das justificativas para conferir à Fábrica da Pedra a marca de um empreendimento nacional que sofria concorrência desleal e, portanto, legitimar as medidas protecionistas assinadas pelo então presidente Arthur Bernardes (Decreto 17.383, 19 de julho de 1926). Ainda nos anos 20, é possível identificar outros exemplos da persistência de Gouveia nas referências ao sertão brasileiro. A imagem de Delmiro como um modernizador aparece no romance *Macunaíma* (1928). Após narrar as aventuras de um personagem singular, o autor não deixou o seu preguiçoso herói "pousar" na Vila da Pedra:

> Então Macunaíma não achou mais graça nesta terra. Capei bem nova relumeava lá na gupiara do céu. Macunaíma cismou ainda indeciso, sem saber si ia morar no céu ou na Ilha de Marajó. Um momento pensou em ir morar na cidade da Pedra com o enérgico Delmiro Gouveia, porém lhe faltou ânimo. Pra viver lá, assim como tinha vivido era impossível. Até era por causa disso mesmo que não achava mais graça na terra... Tudo o que fora a existência dele apesar de tantos casos tanta brincadeira tanta ilusão tanto sofrimento tanto heroísmo. Afinal, não fora sinão um se deixar viver: e para viver na cidade do Delmiro ou na Ilha de Marajó que são desta terra carecia de ter um sentido. E ele não tinha coragem pra uma organização. Decidiu: "—Qual o quê! [. . .] quando urubu está de caipora o de baixo caga no de cima, este mundo não tem jeito e vou pro céu." (*Macunaíma* 157)

A "cidade do Delmiro" aparece assim como lugar da disciplina. Um espaço que se distancia, portanto, das representações do sertão como palco de desordem. Seria um *habitat* pouco adequado para alguém como o "herói sem nenhum caráter" de Mário de Andrade (1893–1945). Contudo, a apropriação de Gouveia como contraponto a Macunaíma merece reflexão. É possível entender a presença de

Delmiro, menos de 10 anos após a sua morte, referenciado em um dos maiores clássicos da literatura brasileira? Certamente não será como um discurso de louvor ao Nordeste. Afinal de contas, Andrade procurou afastar de si o discurso regionalista. Daí a sua afirmação de que um dos seus objetivos foi "desrespeitar lendariamente" tanto a geografia quanto a fauna e flora geográficas. Em *Macunaíma*, espaços e expressões regionalistas aparecem misturados. Deste modo, ele escreveu que "desregionalizava o mais possível a criação ao mesmo tempo que conseguia o mérito de conhecer literariamente o Brasil como entidade homogênea" ("Prefácio"). Macunaíma a todo tempo repete: "Ai . . . que preguiça!" A expressão vai de encontro ao trabalho ético, à disciplina, valores que Delmiro Gouveia, chamado por Mário de "grande cearense," parecia encarnar para o intelectual paulista. Deste modo, ao posicionar Gouveia no clímax do livro, como uma das alternativas para seu anti-herói, Mário contrapõe o espírito aventureiro do brasileiro a uma experiência aparentemente isolada de culto à disciplina, ao trabalho.[4]

Diferente do que fez com seu mais famoso personagem, Andrade descreve Delmiro como "gênio da disciplina," homem que "lixava as operárias da fiação que iam para o trabalho sem lavar a cara, ou os padres que apareciam na Pedra tirando as esmolas pra coisas longínquas" ("O grande cearense" 42). Se Macunaíma foi embora por não suportar esta terra, Gouveia foi morto porque esta terra não o suportava. Para o escritor, Delmiro era uma espécie de "[. . .] dramático movimentador de luzes [. . .] dentro do noturno de caráter do Brasil." Daí o seu fim trágico: "[. . .] teve o fim que merecia: assassinaram-no. Nós não podíamos suportar esse farol que feria os nossos olhos gestadores de ilusões, a cidade da Pedra nas Alagoas." Assim, o aspecto trágico da morte de Delmiro surge nas palavras de Mário de Andrade aparentemente como uma legítima punição a um indivíduo transgressor. De acordo com a correspondência e com os diferentes prefácios de Andrade para o seu livro (que findou sendo publicado sem nenhum), *Macunaíma* foi escrito em poucos dias, entre 16 e 23 de dezembro de 1926, depois ampliado em 1927. Na verdade, o autor conheceu a obra *Von Roraima Zum Orinoco* (De Roraima para Orenoco) do filólogo, geógrafo e historiador alemão Theodor Koch-Grünberg[5] e, segundo ele, dela se apropriou, principalmente do seu segundo volume, à maneira dos cantadores nordestinos "[. . .] que compram no primeiro sebo uma gramática, uma geografia, ou

um jornal do dia, e compõem com isso um desafio de sabença, ou um romance trágico de amor, vivido no Recife." Daí, Andrade afirmar no *Diário Nacional* de 20 de setembro de 1931: "Isso é o Macunaíma e esses sou eu." Portanto, Mário situa a sua criação como um produto quase artesanal, resultante de colagens diversas, de costuras culturais, classificando a si mesmo como alguém de tão múltiplas faces quanto o herói da sua rapsódia que, ainda assim, finda sendo uma espécie de herói-síntese, "[. . .] altamente complexo, pois nele se acumulam caracteres heteróclitos, que se superpõem, muitas vezes sem um traço comum que facilite a evidenciação" (Proença 10). Mário seguiria, então, segundo as suas próprias palavras, uma metodologia que o aproximava do cantador sertanejo, do cordelista que antropofagicamente prepara o seu texto.

Também reunindo contradições em torno da sua personalidade, Gouveia parece ter mesmo impressionado Mário de Andrade. Afinal de contas, cabe lembrar que o cearense foi, ele mesmo, aos 39 anos, personagem de um "romance trágico de amor" iniciado no Recife—"trágico" pelas conseqüências trazidas para Delmiro, perseguido pela polícia pernambucana, ameaçado pelos parentes da moça (menor de idade nos tempos iniciais do namoro), alvo dos comentários da sociedade recifense e, possivelmente, tema de alguns cordelistas. Não é improvável que o escritor, no ímpeto de "conhecer literariamente o Brasil," tenha encontrado menções a Delmiro em meio a trovadores e periódico nordestinos. Afinal de contas, Gouveia volta e meia freqüentava as páginas dos jornais e revistas (não é corriqueiro alguém ameaçar um vice-presidente da República de bengala em punho, em plena Rua do Ouvidor, no Rio de Janeiro, como ele fizera em 1899). O seu assassinato, como vimos, foi noticiado em inúmeros veículos de comunicação.

Por outro lado, se voltarmos a ler o excerto de *Macunaíma* e seguirmos um pouco mais adiante, ficaremos sabendo que o herói andradiano decide ir para a lua e ser "[. . .] o brilho bonito mas inútil porém de mais uma constelação" (157). Afinal de contas, o que significa ir para a lua? Segundo Cavalcanti Proença, podemos considerar esta opção pelo "brilho inútil" da lua como uma metáfora sobre as conclusões tiradas pelo herói da análise da vida que teve na terra. Indo para a lua, Macunaíma "[. . .] continuaria a brilhar, embora sem finalidade nem seriedade, nessa vocação para o brilho puro, sem calor, que Mário de Andrade censurou tantas vezes nos artistas brasileiros" (Proença 15). Em 1928, o próprio Mário, numa

das suas muitas cartas a Carlos Drummond de Andrade, exorta o amigo a não "viver o brilho intenso das estrelas," mas "tentar São Paulo" e escreve: "[. . .] quem sabe se o contato com uma cidade de trabalho, no meio nosso dum trabalho cotidianizado e corajoso, você tem coragem pra uma organização e abandona essa solução a que Macunaíma chegou" (*A Lição do Amigo* 133). A falta de "brilho" (ou, se acompanharmos a argumentação de Mário, de um ambiente dominado pelo trabalho), torna o herói andradiano dono de um triste fim. O uso desta alegoria é recorrente, se considerarmos que Gouveia é relembrado pelo modernista como "faroleiro." A carência desta luz, deste brilho tão útil, tem como corolário um destino quase tão trágico para o herói da rapsódia quanto aquele reservado ao próprio cearense, por quem Mário revela interesse em passagens efêmeras de crônicas e correspondências. Uma destas manifestações de apreço aparece nas reminiscências de uma excursão.

Entre dezembro de 1928 e março de 1929, Mário de Andrade realizou a sua segunda "viagem etnográfica." Na primeira, visitara a região do Amazonas e do Peru. Agora, a nova empreitada contemplava também regiões do Nordeste. Na ocasião, inclusive, passou pela Ilha de Marajó que, em *Macunaíma*, colocou curiosamente próxima à Pedra. Esta viagem foi importante para Andrade. Entre as suas memórias, ficou a de uma conversa em meio ao Atlântico, relembrada anos depois em um texto para o *Diário de São Paulo*: "[. . .] um homem do Pará sucede ter convivido muito com Delmiro e conversamos sobre o grande cearense" ("O grande cearense" 42). Quais os traços deste personagem foram narrados para Andrade por seu companheiro de viagem naquele dia lembrado como "feio" e de mar indócil? Um deles certamente foi o *ethos* disciplinador de Gouveia. E Andrade parece ter se divertido com o que ouviu: "[. . .] falaram que Delmiro Gouveia era perverso, era não. Meu companheiro afirma que esse Antônio Conselheiro do trabalho não mandou matar ninguém" ("O grande cearense" 42). O escritor registrou ainda: "Delmiro costumava falar que brasileiro sem sova não ia, e por sinal que sovou e mandou sovar gente sem conta, bem feito" ("O grande cearense" 42). Não bastasse isto o autor paulista amplia a sua ironia: "[. . .] a arma dele era principalmente o chicote que manejava como artista de circo. E tinha birra de mulher fumante" ("O grande cearense" 42). Andrade descreve as intervenções de Delmiro como únicas e contraditórias, experiências que não deveriam ser esquecidas. Apesar da violência,

satirizada pelo autor que comparava o negociante a um hábil artista circense, o processo civilizatório lançado por Gouveia nas Alagoas chamava a atenção do intelectual. As intervenções do cearense nos hábitos dos moradores eram bem vistas, pois a cidadezinha alcançou uma "perfeição de mecanismo urbano como nunca houve igual em nossa terra." O controle sobre os hábitos da população sertaneja só atestava o *ethos* modernizador de Gouveia: "Si um menino falhava na aula, Delmiro mandava chamar o pai pra saber o por quê. Chegou a despedir os pais que roubavam os dias de estudos aos filhos, por algum servicinho." Esta passagem de Andrade insere o agroindustrial numa perspectiva diferenciada entre os donos de terra tipicamente presentes em romances regionalistas. Na perspectiva de Mário, Delmiro destoa, por exemplo, das idéias defendidas por um dos personagens mais conhecidos de Graciliano Ramos—Paulo Honório, o indiferente senhor das terras de *São Bernardo*:

> Efetuei transações arriscadas, endividei-me, importei maquinismos e não prestei atenção aos que me censuravam por querer abarcar o mundo com as pernas. Iniciei a pomicultura e a avicultura. Para levar os meus produtos ao mercado, comecei uma estrada de rodagem. Azevedo Gondim compôs sobre ela dois artigos, chamou-me patriota, citou Ford e Delmiro Gouveia. (49)

Embora o próprio Delmiro seja mencionado pela personagem, a distância entre eles fica evidente no romance. Paulo Honório não quer escolas, médicos, roupas, higiene e banheiros (que tanto impressionaram Oliveira Lima) para os trabalhadores. Nada disto. Ao ironicamente situá-lo entre Delmiro e Henry Ford, Ramos sinaliza para uma concepção do cearense como um modernizador. Paulo Honório, embora seja comparado a Gouveia (que, como o dono de S. Bernardo também abriu estradas) e a Ford, não demonstrou grande preocupação com intervenções nos hábitos dos trabalhadores, em controlar a moral dos seus subordinados, em promover melhorias para a gente que rodeava a sua fábrica. Se acaso isto ocorre na obra, não parece ser uma preocupação central para Honório, algo que caracterizasse fundamentalmente a personagem. Ao contrário do Delmiro, que policiava os passos de pais e filhos operários, Paulo Honório pouco se importa com a gente do campo, com os seus empregados. Vejamos

a maneira com que o fazendeiro refere-se a um trabalhador enfermo: "Uma doença qualquer, e é isto: adiantamentos, remédios. Vai-se o lucro todo. [. . .] Mas não tem dúvida: mande o que for necessário. Mande meia cuia de farinha, mande uns litros de feijão. É dinheiro perdido" (*São Bernardo* 111).

A rápida menção feita ao agroindustrial em *São Bernardo* apenas sugere Gouveia como uma referência civilizadora para Graciliano. Um texto posterior nos convida a refletir sobre as contribuições do mesmo Graciliano na arquitetura de Delmiro Gouveia como um mártir modernizador. Em sua crônica "Recordações de uma indústria morta," originalmente publicada na revista *Cultura Política*[6] em agosto de 1942 e presente na obra póstuma *Viventes das Alagoas*, Graciliano Ramos narra que, em Pedra, Delmiro "estirava uma autoridade sem limites" (115). A cidade, que em 1952 ganharia o nome do comerciante cearense, foi descrita da seguinte maneira:

> [. . .] arame farpado cercava a fábrica e a vila operária. E os agentes do Governo, funcionários da prefeitura, soldados de polícia, detinham-se nas cancelas, porque lá dentro não eram precisos. Estava tudo em ordem, ordem até excessiva, as casas abrindo-se e fechando no horário, os deveres conjugais observados com rigor, o cinema exibindo fitas piedosas, as escolas arrumando nas crianças noções convenientes. Apito de manhã, apito ao cair da noite, instrumentos e pessoas em roda viva, tudo melhorando, a procura superior à oferta. ("Recordações" 115)

O excerto acima oferece mais indícios sobre a concepção que Graciliano estabelece de Gouveia. Apesar de delinear o negociante de peles como um modernizador—algo evidenciado pelo apito da fábrica, pela vila operária—Ramos insinua excessos de Delmiro. Assim, se há um mártir nas palavras do escritor alagoano, trata-se de alguém contraditório. Temos, na crônica sobre a "indústria morta" de Delmiro Gouveia, uma leitura menos apologética do seu fundador. Contudo, a compor o oxímoro recorrente nos narradores da vida de Delmiro, há no texto um indisfarçável elogio ao pioneirismo do "caboclo." A mesma cidade de escolas com noções convenientes é cercada de arames farpados; se há rigor no cinema e nos deveres conjugais, sabe-se que as pessoas se misturam aos instrumentos em roda viva.

Vale lembrar que Graciliano viveu em Palmeira dos Índios, no agreste alagoano, a 190 km da Pedra. Antes de ser um escritor famoso, o autor de *São Bernardo* chegou a ser prefeito da cidade (1928–1930). Palmeira era a "porta" para ligar o litoral ao sertão alagoano. Em meados dos anos 10, o futuro escritor se viu forçado a retornar para a pequena cidade. Os negócios da família exigiam a sua atenção. De volta à Palmeira, Ramos certamente ouviu relatos sobre os empreendimentos de Gouveia. Observador atento do cotidiano da cidade, ele talvez até tenha visto Delmiro e seus cinco automóveis, em carreata, impressionarem os habitantes da cidade quando, por volta de 1915, o cearense resolveu se exibir com as máquinas até então inéditas por aqueles lados das Alagoas.

Conjecturas à parte, na descrição de Ramos, a cidade da Pedra aparece como espaço que atestava a viabilidade do sertão, a necessidade de explorar as águas do rio São Francisco. Delmiro é um anunciador desta viabilidade, pois foi "[. . .] numa cachoeira notável, mencionada sempre com respeito, admiração e inércia" que o barulho das turbinas foi "[. . .] acordar alguns cavalos da manada que lá dormia o sono dos séculos" ("Recordações" 115). Cabe lembrar que o texto de Graciliano destinava-se a uma publicação oficial do Estado Novo. *Cultura Política* deveria reunir intelectuais das mais diferentes tendências para a produção de textos sobre a Nação. A ênfase nestes tempos recaía sobre escritos referentes à "realidade nacional;" abordagens que mostrassem a falência do liberalismo; as mazelas da Primeira República, contrapondo-as aos avanços do regime oficialmente implantado em 1937.

Esta busca pela "realidade nacional" na literatura alimentava a preocupação em estabelecer o olhar sociológico em diversas publicações. Os novos tempos pediam que o intelectual saísse da sua "torre de marfim" e contribuísse na tessitura de um novo ambiente, que reunisse o mundo da cultura (espaço dos homens de pensamento, os intelectuais) ao mundo da política (espaço dos homens de ação, os políticos). É emblemática desta estratégia incorporadora de intelectuais ao projeto estadonovista a eleição de Getúlio Vargas para a Academia Brasileira de Letras, em 1943 (Velloso, *Os intelectuais* 11). Neste plano interpretativo da realidade nacional, os ideólogos do Estado Novo elegeram Euclides da Cunha (1866–1909) como uma espécie de patrono das letras. A sua interpretação científica é tomada como exemplar. A discussão sobre as interferências no interior do

Brasil e sobre a arte de narrar a trajetória da história brasileira via-se, assim, envolta na perspectiva euclidiana. Mas, ao mesmo tempo, era importante afastar a pátina do atraso brasileiro. Neste contexto, cabia evidenciar que os focos da mudança estavam por toda parte. Ao narrar as diferenças regionais, os intelectuais se esforçaram para apontar ícones de um desenvolvimento que, se não era ainda efetivo, existia potencialmente (Velloso, *Os intelectuais* 10).

É possível dizer que tanto na ótica de Mário de Andrade, quanto na de Graciliano Ramos, Delmiro é circundado pelo halo civilizatório. E, deste modo, a memória configurada acerca dele é a de um arauto da mudança, herói-síntese da modernização redentora. Mas, ao contrário de Andrade, que ironizava a sociologia classificando-a como a "arte de salvar rapidamente o Brasil," Graciliano parece mais próximo de uma perspectiva euclidiana ao observar um processo efêmero de ascensão e queda do sertão industrial. Pelo que assevera o escritor alagoano, os feitos de Delmiro representam uma experiência proveitosa apagada da memória local. Esquecimento que, segundo ele, "[. . .] amortalhou a indústria aparecida com audácia no sertão, entre imburanas, catingueiras, rabos-de-raposa e coroas-de-frade" ("Recordações" 116). Além desta evidente referência ao eclipse de Gouveia e sua obra, se o texto de Ramos pode ser visto como um elogio ao coronel, ele também sugere contradições ao descrever um tempo e um lugar no qual "[. . .] estava tudo em ordem, ordem até excessiva." Em dias de Estado Novo, este sutil comentário que escapa na crônica sugere uma visão menos idealizada de Gouveia e, talvez, dos próprios tempos em que vivia Graciliano.[7]

A crônica acima mencionada apresenta curiosas alegorias, ao falar sobre uma "manada de cavalos" a ser despertada por Gouveia para a indústria. Mas simultaneamente sabe-se que, apesar do despertar, há arame farpado a deter o entra-e-sai das pessoas. Deste modo, embora muitas vezes apareça de forma quase ocasional, Delmiro é freqüentemente chamado para exemplar quando as descrições se referem ao potencial do Nordeste. Daí a afirmação sobre a "malícia cabocla" feita por Graciliano. Graças a esta habilidade, o sertanejo chamado Gouveia "[. . .] saiu da capoeira, estabeleceu-se na cidade, passou a infligir a criadores e intermediários as regras a que se havia sujeitado em tempos duros" (Ramos, "Recordações" 113).

Este mito civilizador, urdido entre os literatos, talvez deva muito da sua força à escrita de Assis Chateaubriand (1892-1960). Pouco depois

de visitar a Pedra, em 1917, Chatô escreveu: "Será possível conseguir do Brasil Sertão alguma coisa de profícuo? Pedra responde affirmativamente a esta pergunta e de um modo decisivo e singular" (3). Porém, é preciso situar a fala de Chateaubriand. O jornalista paraibano movimenta sua escrita dentro de um trauma ainda recente à sua época—o movimento de Canudos e os sangrentos combates dele conseqüentes. Gouveia e seus empreendimentos—o aproveitamento hidrelétrico da cachoeira de Paulo Afonso, uma fábrica em pleno sertão, uma cidade com energia elétrica, água encanada, escola e "polícia" sempre vigilante, regulando os costumes—emergem como uma espécie de profilaxia à volta de fenômenos messiânicos. Chatô, que visitara a vila ao lado de Oliveira Lima, afirmou ainda: "Pedra começa a resgatar o assalto de Canudos, incorporando a cidade à civilização" (3).

Não por acaso, este texto de Chateaubriand foi batizado de "Uma resposta a Canudos." O autor elogiava a ação de Delmiro, que lutava contra "[. . .] a ignorância, o fanatismo religioso" utilizando "[. . .] máquinas, engenhos de indústria humana, que em vez da morte e da destruição, ensinam o sertanejo e o jagunço o trabalho fecundo que educa, civiliza e aperfeiçoa" (3). Assim, o Hércules-Quasímodo euclidiano seria, então, suplantado por um sertanejo moderno, civilizado. O artigo fez com que o próprio negociante escrevesse carta ao jornalista, agradecendo os elogios recebidos: "Doutorzinho, você sabe escrever tão bonito da gente que este pobre matuto nem tem como agradecer-lhe. Aqui houve sertanejo que chorou" (Morais 94–95). Exatamente um mês após a publicação do texto de Chateaubriand, Delmiro foi assassinado. Alguns parágrafos acima vimos que a viagem de Mário de Andrade pelo Brasil, por ele mesmo denominada de "etnográfica," foi fundamental para uma série de escritos daquele intelectual. Ao remexer nas lembranças das viagens e narrar a sua conversa com um paraense, o escritor paulista se reencontrou com o "Antônio Conselheiro do Trabalho."[8] Uma pergunta a ser feita: Mário teria lido o artigo de Chateaubriand? Possivelmente. Assinando diferentes colunas jornalísticas e ávido escritor de cartas para destinatários como o poeta pernambucano Manuel Bandeira e ao mineiro Carlos Drummond de Andrade, o autor de *Paulicéia Desvairada* não deve ter deixado passar desapercebido o texto de Chatô. Porém, a sua concepção é diferente daquela estabelecida pelo jornalista paraibano. Enquanto em Chatô circulam estereótipos antagônicos (o beato e o modernizador), Mário reúne estas duas figuras e atribui a elas uma

nova função: evangelizar pelo trabalho. Levar a luz civilizatória ao interior do país através da disciplina e do mundo produtivo.

O que nos dizem estas duas referências, distantes entre si não apenas cronologicamente, mas também em sua perspectiva? O que tais menções podem nos dizer sobre Canudos, o sertão e Delmiro? Ao que tudo indica, os estereótipos sobre o sertão envolvendo o cangaço, o coronelismo, a seca e o messianismo foram repertórios que muitos intelectuais tomaram para discutir os rumos da região. O peso de um livro como *Os Sertões* (1902) de Euclides da Cunha, nestes tempos, é praticamente inegável. Conselheiro e seus seguidores aparecem como uma mácula, um obstáculo a ser superado no projeto de modernização pelo qual deveria passar aquele espaço.

Por sua vez, aparecendo em diversos escritos como "modernizador dos sertões," Delmiro Gouveia e seus empreendimentos também chamaram a atenção de Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), que afirmou: "Está ainda por ser escrito o estudo biográfico que integre essa curiosa figura de 'self-made man' na época e no meio mais incisivamente alcançados pelo seu arrojo e pela sua inteligência" (*Ordem* 663). A concepção de Gouveia como um "self-made man" provavelmente foi discutida em diálogos com o já citado Oliveira Lima, de quem Freyre foi hóspede em suas viagens pelos Estados Unidos e em Portugal, além de um correspondente corriqueiro durante alguns anos (Gomes 13–14). Leitor do velho diplomata, Freyre parece ter nutrido semelhante admiração por Gouveia, a ponto de indicar o prédio da Vila Anunciada para primeira sede do Instituto Joaquim Nabuco de Pesquisas Sociais.

Em dois livros de Gilberto Freyre, *Ordem e Progresso* e *O Velho Félix e suas memórias de um Cavalcanti*, publicados pela primeira vez em 1959, Delmiro aparece brevemente. No primeiro deles, o intelectual pernambucano aponta a Vila Anunciada, a conhecida residência de Gouveia, como um local de destaque no Recife oitocentista. A Vila era um "palacete com banheiro quase imperial de mármore: palacete a que deu um tanto liricamente o nome da esposa" (Freyre, *Ordem* 663). O "Mestre de Apipucos" classifica Gouveia como um dos "novos ricos," "novos poderosos" que o Recife viu surgir ao final dos oitocentos. Era mais um dos desorientados sobre o que fazer com o dinheiro, o poder e a cultura adquiridos às pressas. Para Freyre, embora dono de dinheiro farto, Gouveia era um novo rico desnorteado e mal educado. Um exemplar dos homens que trariam

o progresso a Pernambuco, mas também representavam o fim de um mundo agrário, arcaico e mais harmônico.

Por sua vez, *O Velho Félix* consiste nos registros de Félix Cavalcanti, editados pelo autor de *Casa Grande & Senzala* e por seu primo Diogo de Melo Meneses. O livro encerra uma série de impressões sobre acontecimentos da vida do Recife e do Brasil. Prefaciando a obra, Freyre explicou que havia lido documentos familiares e o *Livro de Assentos* de Cavalcanti, "[. . .] um vasto caderno guardado com carinho por sua filha Maria Cavalcanti de Albuquerque Melo (Iaiá)" (*O Velho Félix* XXVII). Em suas rememorações, produzidas tempos depois dos fatos que presenciou ou dos quais foi contemporâneo, o velho Cavalcanti demonstra indignação com o incêndio do Mercado do Derby, concebido como símbolo de um tempo, síntese do empreendedorismo de Delmiro. O mercado fora incendiado na noite de 1° de janeiro de 1900. Félix anotou em seu livro de memórias: "[. . .] amanheceu o dia 2 de janeiro [. . .] sob a mais dolorosa impressão causada pelo incêndio do Derby." E explica: "O que era o Mercado do Derby? Um monumento. Uma obra tal que me dizem que um alemão indo visitá-lo disse que o Brasil não estava em condições de possuir uma obra daquele porte." Cavalcanti se mostra indignado com o fato de que, além de ter o negócio destruído, Delmiro ainda é preso. Após o incêndio destroçar o mercado, Gouveia foi preso sob a acusação de ter sido o mandante do crime. O objetivo para tal seria o recebimento do seguro do Derby.[9] Para tanto, conta o narrador, foi enviado um "aparato de exército" para aprisionar o comerciante: "50 praças de polícia convenientemente municiadas às ordens do Alferes Feitosa. Feitosa até há pouco tempo ocupava-se em entregar pão das padarias: agora é alferes; isto é, progresso republicano!" (Freyre, *O Velho Félix* 134). Nas palavras de Cavalcanti passeiam juntos a ojeriza pela República e a simpatia por Gouveia.

As transformações atribuídas à República indignam o velho Félix. Para ele, melhor seria se houvesse na ocasião um levante popular liderado por "[. . .] um daqueles homens que existiram até a revolução de 48."[10] Incomodava a Cavalcanti a idéia de que um mercado, aplaudido por um alemão, estava em chamas pela ação de homens que, em sua ótica, punham fogo também no progresso de Pernambuco, alimentavam o clientelismo e negavam espaço a inovações. A sua indignação com a rápida ascensão de Feitosa, que pula de entregador de pães para alferes, numa clara referência aos vícios mantidos pela

República, se aproxima da descrição quase indiferente feita por Freyre a "Delmiro Gouveia, que de pequeno chefe da estação de estrada de ferro suburbana subiu quase da noite para o dia nos primeiros anos da República a grande industrial" (*Ordem* 663). Ainda assim, estes saltos do comerciante cearense entre as classes sociais--de simples funcionário da Brazilian Street a rico e poderoso comerciante--foram minimizados num momento em que Freyre procurava elementos para atestar a força de Pernambuco no contexto nacional. Embora ironizasse a origem e a pouca formação de Gouveia, *Sir* Freyre arrumou um lugar para Delmiro que, apesar de cearense, novo rico e desnorteado, estava entre os representantes da *pernambucanidade* que o sociólogo de Apipucos caracterizava como "um ânimo, um estilo ou um modo de ser brasileiros diferentes" ("O estado" 7).

Enquanto Graciliano Ramos via nos truques do sertanejo Gouveia partes essenciais de um itinerário redentor, Freyre apresentou observações mais comedidas, menos preocupadas com os custos sociais das artimanhas de Delmiro, do que com a cristalização de um tempo de progresso que Pernambuco viveu. E, assim, entre registros de figuras como o "Papai-Outro," em crônicas como as de Graciliano e Mário de Andrade, cristalizou-se a memória de Delmiro Gouveia "modernizador." Todavia, é importante observar a variedade de interpretações feitas sobre a mesma personagem. Em meio a diários, cartas, textos jornalísticos, contos, o comerciante cearense sobreviveu e, ao contrário do que disse Graciliano, não foi eclipsado de forma tão eficaz. Sendo assim e considerando as fontes como espelhos deformantes (Ginzburg, *O queijo* 17, 20), como entender o olhar sobre Delmiro? Como este personagem, em determinados momentos, ganhou tanto espaço na produção cultural brasileira? Por quais motivos o seu nome passou a ser associado ao desenvolvimento regional e a quem interessa a construção de Gouveia como um ícone?

Talvez, tais questionamentos devam ser pensados no interior da lógica construtora da identidade regional e da resposta ao descompasso do Nordeste frente ao ritmo de industrialização do Sul e Sudeste do Brasil. Em tempos distintos, retomar a memória de Delmiro era apontar um exemplo que não foi seguido (como aparece em Mário de Andrade), o desenvolvimento latente e esporádico do sertão e o peso da vida sobre extrema disciplina (tal qual nos sugere Graciliano Ramos) ou ainda realizar a apropriação de um ícone identitário (como em Gilberto Freyre). As intervenções realizadas sobre a memória de

Gouveia por estes intelectuais colocaram em movimento um conjunto de representações que articulavam o discurso nacionalista ao problema do desenvolvimento regional e tomavam as experiências modernizadoras do "coronel" como exemplos da viabilidade econômica do Nordeste. Uma leitura forjada provavelmente não por ficcionistas dos oitocentos, mas por intelectuais do século XX nascente—como Chateaubriand e Oliveira Lima—que ainda conviviam com os ecos de problemas como Canudos, Juazeiro e os estereótipos deles resultantes.

Por outro lado, esta visita a algumas narrativas produzidas no século XX indicia que, presente em diferentes textos, nos quais ora ocupa centro, ora periferia, Delmiro transformou-se num mito, um ícone regional. Entre outras leituras possíveis, Gouveia representaria o nordestino que se contrapõe a um mundo de práticas arcaicas, inicia um processo modernizador e é morto por isto. O próprio atrelamento do seu assassinato à perseguição do capital estrangeiro sinaliza para um caráter fatalista da história. A saga de Gouveia aparece assim talhada, de um lado, pelo significativo peso das disputas econômicas e da inserção dos sertões nesta órbita e, por outro, pelas condições culturais de uma sociedade resistente às inovações que ele sintetizava nas narrativas dos letrados aqui observados. As implicações desta representação não são poucas. Uma delas, presentes em alguns textos aqui apresentados, é a de que ao barrar Delmiro e seus projetos, em lugar dos "tempos modernos," o Nordeste trouxe para si o atraso como castigo.

Notas

1. Um estudo que permanece emblemático acerca das imagens do Nordeste em diferentes manifestações (literatura, artes plásticas, música e cinema) é o trabalho de Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Júnior, *A Invenção do Nordeste e outras artes*.

2. Os dois movimentos, Canudos (1893-1897) e Juazeiro, marcam a história republicana em seus primeiros momentos. Por um lado, havia o choque provocado em Canudos , no sertão baiano, entre as forças governamentais e os camponeses liderados pelo beato Antônio Conselheiro. Por outro, a crescente influência religiosa e política de Cícero Romão Batista, o Padre Cícero, sediado em Juazeiro, na região do Cariri, Ceará, os sertões do Nordeste despertavam a curiosidade e, ao mesmo tempo, circulavam na imprensa escrita como palcos

de barbárie. Todavia, Marco Antônio Villa esclarece que embora os problemas em Canudos tenham parecido maiores quando foi levantada a hipótese de que Padre Cícero, em desavenças com o bispo de Fortaleza desde 1896, se uniria a Antônio Conselheiro, deve-se perceber as dessemelhanças entre os dois casos: "Apesar de o padre Cícero estar em conflito com a Igreja, o mesmo não ocorria em relação ao Estado e à classe dominante da região" (181). Rui Facó traça um perfil também dessemelhante do padre frente ao beato: "o sacerdote, apontado como milagreiro, conseguiu ser, por um longo período, ditador de almas, chefe político local, vice-governador do Estado, deputado federal eleito que recusou a assumir a cadeira para não abandonar seu aprisco, tornou-se proprietário territorial" (124).

3. Delmiro Gouveia. *Revista da Semana.* 20 out. 1917.18.

4. Neste aspecto, cabe observar as considerações de Manuel Cavalcanti Proença: "E esse espírito de aventura do brasileiro, contrapondo-se ao trabalho, não é invenção de Mário de Andrade mas observação de sociólogos eruditos falando sério, mestres como Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda" (12).

5. De acordo com Câmara Cascudo, Macunaíma é "[. . .] entidade divina para os macuxis, acavais, arecunas, taulipangues, indígenas caraíbas, a oeste do platô da serra de Roraima e Alto Rio Branco, na Guiana Brasileira" (347). Como esclarece Cavalcanti Proença, tanto o nome de Macunaíma quanto o de seus irmãos se refere ao herói indígena cujo nome aparece pela primeira vez em 1868, em trabalho de W.H. Brett acerca dos silvícolas da Guiana: "Desconhecendo a verdadeira personalidade, os missionários usaram o nome Macunaíma para traduzir o de Deus, nos catecismos, conforme o testemunho de Capistrano de Abreu, Herbert Baldus e do próprio Amoroso Lima" (8). É ainda Câmara Cascudo quem explica que, com o passar do tempo, Macunaíma foi-se tornando um "[. . .] misto de astúcia, maldade instintiva e natural, de alegria zombeteira e feliz" (347).

6. A revista Cultura Política foi idealizada pelos agentes culturais do Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda (DIP), com o objetivo de reunir textos de diferentes intelectuais em uma só publicação que ressaltaria a unidade em torno do projeto estadonovista. Pagando bem pelos textos nela publicados, a revista atraiu diversos intelectuais. Sobre isto ver Mônica Pimenta Velloso *Os Intelectuais e a Política Cultural do Estado Novo.*

7. A tradição euclidiana, baseada em amplo lastro documental, concebe o realismo na escrita como uma necessidade do narrador. Durante o Estado Novo (1937-1945), esta concepção foi ressaltada com vistas a sedimentar um discurso homogêneo em torno do nacional. Sobre a postura diferenciada dos intelectuais ver Mônica Pimenta Velloso, "A literatura como espelho da Nação."

8. A existência de repertórios de imagens comuns a uma determinada tradição é explorada habilmente por Carlo Ginzburg em um curioso artigo, "Um lapso do Papa Wotjla."

9. Gouveia respondeu a tais acusações pela imprensa, informando que, apesar dos problemas nos negócios, a sua situação financeira era muito boa. Em 4 de janeiro de 1900, Gouveia escreveu uma carta, que providenciou que fosse publicada, no dia seguinte, no jornal *A Província*. Nela ele afirma: "Não devo a pessoa alguma e nos meus bens de raíz há dez ou quinze vezes mais da soma precisa para cobrir minhas obrigações de comerciante e industrial, dada a hipótese que hoje findasse o prazo de todas e elas são em pequeno número"(Menezes 106).

10. A referência feita aos "homens de 48" é uma evocação dos líderes da Revolução Praieira, ocorrida em Pernambuco. Tendo início em setembro de 1848 e se estendendo até 1850, a Praieira compreendeu "[. . .] o clímax de um confronto entre grupos liberais (praieiros) e conservadores (guabirus) pelo domínio da província," como escreveu Izabel Marson (223). Entre os seus principais líderes estavam Peixoto de Brito, Borges da Fonseca, Pedro Ivo, Afonso Ferreira, Manuel Pereira de Moraes. O nome atribuído ao movimento deriva do Partido Nacional de Pernambuco, também chamado de Partido da Praia, que obteve apoio considerável dos eleitores primários do Recife. O movimento se tornou um símbolo da resistência liberal contra a ascensão conservadora e ganhou destaque na historiografia sobre o Império no Brasil.

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Rafael Alberti y el peso del ayer

C. Brian Morris
Universidad de California, Los Ángeles

No siempre se puede ser
del momento que se vive.
Nos pesa mucho el ayer.

Yo sueño con un futuro
que no le pese el ayer.

Baladas y canciones del Paraná (1953-1954)

No obstante las muchas diferencias que nos distinguen, tenemos dos cosas en común: un futuro implacablemente igualador, y un pasado que se llena de vivencias y, a través de la memoria, de reviviscencias. Ante la muerte que nos espera y el ayer que, según nos recuerda Quevedo, ya se fue (4),[1] todos reaccionamos de modos distintos. Rafael Alberti se alinea con Jorque Manrique, Quevedo y Bécquer, preocupándose más por el pasado que por el futuro, adoptando una perspectiva que él reconoce como elegíaco, y lamentando, en *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*, que "Nos pesa mucho el ayer" (*Oc* II 756). Francisco Brines ha afirmado que "Todos los poetas son elegíacos." Alberti fue más lejos aún, enlazando vida y obra en su confesión, hecha en las postrimerías de su vida, de que "[. . .] toda mi vida, puedo decir sin exageración, es una elegía. Casi todo el tono de mi poesía es elegíaco" (*Arboleda* [1996] 22). Él mismo señala la coincidencia entre la muerte y el génesis de su vocación poética, afirmando en sus memorias que, con el fallecimiento de su padre, "Mi vocación poética había comenzado. Así, a los pies de la muerte, en una atmósfera tan fúnebre como romántica" (*Arboleda* [1959] 141). Y, para estrechar aún más la relación entre muerte y poesía, recuerda que "Volví de nuevo a visitar los cementerios, con Bécquer en los labios y una opresión en el pecho" (*Arboleda* [1959] 144).

En la obra de Rafael Alberti no faltan poemas a las que él pusiera el marbete de elegía, a nada menos que a cuatro en *Marinero en tierra*

(1924). Denominar elegía a un poema hasta cierto punto controla al lector, identificando su género y su propósito, el que, según Bruce W. Wardropper, "parte de una muerte y no de *la* muerte" (8). Lo que hace nuestro poeta, en cambio, es subrayar no el género sino el tono, que no puede ser sino elegíaco cuando tantas veces lamenta la pérdida, la destrucción, la separación y la ruptura. Las "rotas raíces" que conmemora en *Baladas y canciones del Paraná,* se pueden referir a más que a su canto, al que, dice, "[. . .] le falta el alimento / de la tierra conocida" (*Oc* II 757). Al adolescente desplazado a Madrid contra su voluntad también le faltó de repente "el alimento / de la tierra conocida," y esa falta, y la conciencia de ella, predominan en *Marinero en tierra*, donde, resentido contra su padre, le increpa con estas preguntas:

> ¿Por qué me trajiste, padre,
> a la ciudad?
> ¿Por qué me desenterraste
> del mar? (*Oc* I 123)

Alberti sentía profundamente el dolor de la distancia, insistiendo en *Pleamar* (1942–1944) que "Sí, yo era marinero en tierra de marinos" (*Oc* II 175), definición que él glosa amargamente en *Versos sueltos de cada día* (1979–1982), donde se describe como "Marinero de sombras y de angustias" (*Oc* III 549). Esta conciencia de la pérdida, asociada estrechamente con el desarraigo, domina sus memorias, que él reunió bajo un título tan sombrío como la arboleda perdida, donde él acude una y otra vez al participio "perdido" y al despido, pronunciando en "¡Adiós infancia libre, pescadora. . . !" (*Arboleda* [1959] 97) su tristeza ante la desaparición de una etapa inocente, feliz, la que luego, lo mismo que Proust, él se dedicaría a recuperar y a revivir durante toda su obra, presa de la añoranza y de la nostalgia. La nostalgia es más que un gran tema, como ha insistido Gregorio Torres Nebrera, de toda la poesía albertiana (47–48): es un sentimiento hondo que se impone como tema, una potente fuerza motora y una presencia constante—o inseparable, según la califica en *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*, donde lamenta:

> Siempre esta nostalgia, esta inseparable
> nostalgia que todo lo aleja y lo cambia. (*Oc* II 701)

Inseparable fue ya cuando se trasladó a Madrid, donde se vio obligado a abrevar en lo que llamó "aquel pozo nostálgico," tan lleno de recuerdos de El Puerto de Santa María (*Arboleda* [1959] 171). El tener que alejarse cada vez más de su tierra natal profundizó la nostalgia, haciendo que la ventana por donde mira en Argentina, "[. . .] que esté abierta o cerrada," dice en *Baladas y canciones del Paraná* (*Oc* II 710), le lleve a Jerez de la Frontera, agudizando la necesidad de ver y recrear en su mente lo que no puede ver con sus propios ojos, y de seguir evocando, y de ahí adorando, lo más esencial de su patria, como pone de manifiesto también en Argentina, en la misma obra:

> Tierras lejanas . . . Y toros.
> Y barcos . . . Mares lejanas.
>
> Os beso, tierras sagradas
> para mí, tierras lejanas.
>
> Me arrodillo en vuestras olas,
> en vuestras arenas, playas.
>
> Olas y arenas sagradas,
> para mí, mares lejanas. (*Oc* II 714–715)

Estas tierras y mares sagradas están aún más distantes—y más añoradas—que cuando las lloró en *Marinero en tierra*, cuya pérdida motivó la protesta deparada a su padre: "¿Por qué me desenterraste / del mar?" Estar desenterrado del mar—hermosa paradoja—es estar fuera de su elemento, apartado de lo que más íntimamente asociaba con su infancia, consagrada como mártir de esa conciencia implacable suya de la pérdida y del alejamiento tanto temporal como físico. En la mente y en la obra de Alberti, la infancia desempeña un doble papel: es víctima a la vez que superviviente gracias a la memoria, concitada y resucitada constantemente por una mente que se niega a olvidar.

La infancia tantas veces evocada por nuestro poeta demuestra dos facetas esenciales de la memoria: su tendencia reiterativa, señalada por Samuel Beckett en su observación "Repetidamente con solamente ínfimas variantes el mismo antaño" (20),[2] y su misión de salvador de vivencias perdidas y recuperables sólo en la mente. Según ha comentado acertadamente una estudiosa de la memoria, Mary Warnock,

"[. . .] hay en la memoria, forzosamente, una sensación de pérdida: miramos hacia atrás a un país al que no podemos volver" (141).[3] Ese sitio especial, ese país irrecuperable, era para Alberti su infancia, representada una y otra vez por su colegio de San Luis Gonzaga, en el Puerto de Santa María, el que permanece congelado en su mente como un recinto que le robaba a él, como a tantos otros, su libertad. En *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*, él cuenta—sin explicar cómo, por ser antojadizos los mecanismos asociativos de la memoria—que "Un barco al pasar me trajo / las ventanas de mi colegio." El paso de ese barco le lleva a situar el colegio, que era culpable de encerrar el sol tanto como a los alumnos desde las seis de la mañana, hora tan temprana que la plaza queda todavía desierta:

> Un barco al pasar me trajo
> las ventanas de mi colegio.
>
> Era una plaza redonda
> con dos araucarias en medio.
>
> A las seis se abría una puerta
> y ya el sol se quedaba dentro.
>
> Afuera, vacía, la plaza,
> con las ventanas del colegio. (*Oc* II 733–734)

Repetidamente en su obra Alberti se asigna el papel de fugitivo de ese colegio-cárcel, denominándose en sus memorias "[. . .] aquel mal colegial playero de los jesuitas" (*Arboleda* [1959] 121–122) y, en *Versos sueltos de cada día*, "[. . .] colegial escapado, a la orilla del mar" (*Oc* III 560). En *Los 8 ocho nombres de Picasso* (1966-1970) es más específico aún, recordando que

> Cuando yo andaba junto al mar de Cádiz,
> huyendo del latín y la aritmética
> y pintando veleros sobre un azul rabioso [. . .] (*Oc* III 127)

Esas dos asignaturas—el latín y la aritmética—eran las que más antipatía generaban en nuestro poeta, representando lo más agobiante de una disciplina escolar a pesar de las notas de Notable y Aprobado que

sacaba (Tejada 26). Alberti nos quiere convencer de que, si no fuera por la aritmética, no habría disfrutado de ninguna "[. . .] alegre mañana pescadora entre el castillo de la Pólvora y Santa Catalina, frente a Cádiz," y que, si no fuera por el latín, no habría cogido "[. . .] la orilla de los pinos, en dirección a San Fernando" (*Arboleda* [1959] 15).[4] Una de las voces que constituyen la textura coral de "El muchachito," uno de los poemas "escénicos" de *El matador* (1961-1965), pronuncia una profecía que habría de cumplirse: "Lo echarán del colegio." Las razones de esa expulsión fulminante las explica al principio del poema el muchacho protagonista, y las glosa al final con igual ingenuidad:

> Me gusta más la playa que el latín.
> El mar azul más que la aritmética.
> El sol durmiéndose en las dunas,
> más que el pintado en una lámina. (*Oc* II 928)

Otro estudioso de la memoria—John Kotre—ha subrayado la importancia de lo que él ha denominado "episodios simbólicos," aclarando que "Encontramos un solo episodio concreto que representa un tema principal de nuestra vida, que resume todo un conjunto de significados" (101).[5] En este enfrentamiento entre la playa y el latín, el mar y las aritméticas, el sol y una reproducción en una lámina, Alberti precisa la naturaleza simbólica de ese constante evocar suyo de su colegio: el colegio representaba el encierro, la falsificación y el ofuscamiento. Recordar la libertad granjeada por rabonas aumenta la vehemencia de su denuncia y la intensidad de su revulsión en "Colegio (S.J.)," de *De un momento a otro* (1934–1938), poema forzosamente modulado por su compromiso político a una causa que fue derrotada:

> [. . .]
> tanta ira,
> tanto odio contenido sin llanto,
> nos llevaban al mar que nunca se preocupa de las raíces
> cuadradas,
> al cielo libertado de teoremas,
> libre de profesores,
> a las dunas calientes
> donde nos orinábamos en fila mirando hacia el colegio.
> (*Oc* I 614–615)

Con sus ciento veinte versos repartidos en seis secciones, "Colegio (S. J.)" rebasa el recuerdo nuclear para convertirse en manifiesto político y documento social, alejándose de la concisión y la precisión que distinguen "Los ángeles colegiales," de *Sobre los ángeles* (1927–1928), donde Alberti capta en solamente diez versos tanto el mundo herméticamente cerrado de la clase con sus aparatos pedagógicos, como la mente cerrada—o, más bien, nunca abierta—de los alumnos que la habitan. Totalmente proscrito por el férreo régimen escolar, el mundo exterior se intuye solamente a través de fenómenos naturales que, como evidencia del ofuscamiento colectivo, son mal interpretados y, de ahí, deformados por todos: "Sólo sabíamos [. . .] que un eclipse de luna equivoca a las flores [. . .] y que las estrellas errantes son niños que ignoran la aritmética." El poeta entonces viene a ser el portavoz, el mensajero, del grupo, intérprete del misterio en el que están sumidos todos; es la voz que, al alternar dos veces "Ninguno comprendíamos" y "Sólo sabíamos," confiere orden estructural al desorden mental, transformando en rutina una manera de vivir y de pensar equivalente a una eclipse o a los borrones hechos de tinta china:

> Ninguno comprendíamos el secreto nocturno de las pizarras
> ni por qué la esfera armilar se exaltaba tan sola cuando la
> mirábamos.
> Sólo sabíamos que una circunferencia puede no ser redonda
> y que un eclipse de luna equivoca a las flores
> y adelanta el reloj de los pájaros.
> Ninguno comprendíamos nada:
> ni por qué nuestros dedos eran de tinta china
> y la tarde cerraba compases para al alba abrir libros.
> Sólo sabíamos que una recta, si quiere, puede ser curva o quebrada
> y que las estrellas errantes son niños que ignoran la aritmética.
> (*Oc* I 435)

La distancia temporal y física genera otro tipo de evocación en "Retornos de los días colegiales," menos reviviscencia que reminiscencia hondamente reflexiva, una divagación lírica a la manera de las también autobiográficas meditaciones de William Wordsworth en *El preludio*, el que recurrió a flores con propósito simbólico lo mismo que nuestro poeta al principio y al final de su poema:

Por jazmines caídos recientes y corolas
de dondiegos de noche vencidas por el día,
me escapo esta mañana inaugural de octubre
hacia los lejanísimos años de mi colegio.
[. . .]
Estas cosas me trajo la mañana de octubre
entre rojos dondiegos de corolas vencidas
y jazmines caídos. (*Oc* II 489, 490)

Como para probar la afirmación de otro estudioso de la memoria—Daniel L. Shacter—de que "[. . .] reconstruimos el pasado para hacer que sea consistente con lo que sabemos ahora" (146),[6] Alberti atribuye al joven colegial la misma conciencia de la libertad que él enfatiza repetidamente en sus memorias, cuyos dos primeros libros coinciden con *Retornos de lo vivo lejano*, haciendo que esta obra sea, en las palabras acertadas de Gregorio Torres Nebrera, "[. . .] una versión versificada de su libro de memorias" (81). Las dos obras coincidentes confirman al mismo tiempo la observación de José María Ridao, con respecto a Walter Benjamin, de que "[. . .] esta repentina necesidad autobiográfica es común entre los autores que se saben abocados a enfrentar tiempos sombríos" (148). Todo el poema de Alberti—y la condena que está implícita en él—está basado en un contraste fundamental, que él despliega en cada estrofa, entre la libertad y el encarcelamiento, entre lo auténtico y lo falso, entre lo natural y lo representado:

El mar reproducido que se expande en el muro
con las delineadas islas en breve rosa,
no adivina que el mar verdadero golpea
con su aldabón azul los patios del recreo.
[. . .]
Las horas prisioneras en un duro pupitre
lo amarran como un pobre remero castigado
que entre las paralelas rejas de los renglones
mira su barca y llora por asirse del aire. (*Oc* II 489, 490)

Alberti nos enseña que la memoria no es, no puede ser, neutral: los contrastes que provoca conllevan juicios y hasta comentarios aciagos acerca de la naturaleza esquiva, relativa, de la libertad. Pensando quizás en las quejas deparadas contra su padre, él musita en la misma obra

que "Podías, cuando fuiste marinero en tierra, / ser más libre que ahora [. . .]" (*Oc* II 529). El contraste que apuntala un poema de *Canciones del Alto Valle del Aniene* (1967–1971) crea un choque de tonos en sintonía con su reacción placentera a las voces y su recuerdo despiadado de la canción. En el momento presente congelado por el poema, nuestro poeta oye, involuntariamente, "[. . .] trenzadas al tambor y a la zampoña, / claras voces de niños y de niñas." Ese coro tan espontáneo y campestre le recuerda la obligación que se le imponía de entonar, en coro forzado, "[. . .] alguna canción idiota / compuesta por una monja." Y se consuela pensando que en la actualidad todavía existen "[. . .] hijos de pastores, / gente campesina" que cantan al aire libre y que, sencillamente, disfrutan de la libertad. El verso "Con el aire me llegan" abre y cierra el poema, cuya concisión estrecha el enlace entre el pasado y el presente:

> Con el aire me llegan,
> trenzadas al tambor y a la zampoña,
> claras voces de niños y de niñas.
>
> Cuando yo estaba en la escuela,
> al terminarse del año,
> cantábamos a la Virgen
> alguna canción idiota
> compuesta por una monja.
>
> Hoy, aquí, todavía,
> son hijos de pastores,
> de gente campesina.
>
> Con el aire me llegan. (*Oc* III 194–195)

En este vaivén de planos temporales y de asociaciones, Alberti demuestra que su memoria es más que un "álbum de postales," según una frase acertada del poema "Carta abierta," de *Cal y canto* (1926–1927) (*Oc* I 372): es un procesador de recuerdos, que ofrece comentarios, veredictos, hasta sobre la función misma de la memoria y los problemas que acarrea. Esta función crítica, reflexiva, se ve claramente en un poema de *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*, el que, más que ser una sencilla reminiscencia de una aventura infantil, llega a ser un comentario profundo sobre la memoria y el paso del tiempo:

Yo mataba los murciélagos
en torres frente a la mar.
Hoy, en balcones lejanos
de la mar y frente a un río,
pasan, negros, por mi frente
y no los quiero matar.

Murciélagos de los días
torreados, frente al mar:
yo os mataba, pero ahora
que está cayendo la tarde
tan lejos de aquella mar,
aunque paséis por mi frente
—¡seguid!— , no os puedo matar. (*Oc* II 698)

Matar murciélagos—actividad a la que el poeta no alude en sus memorias—parece ser un episodio simbólico, es decir, en las palabras del ya citado John Kotre, "[. . .] un solo episodio concreto que representa un tema principal de nuestra vida." Según Gorgo, en el drama *El adefesio* (1942), los murciélagos "Anidan en la cabeza del demonio . . . Y dan vueltas y vueltas como el remordimiento" (*Adefesio* 281). En este poema, los murciélagos dan vueltas y vueltas en la memoria del poeta, el que insiste: "[. . .] pasan, negros, por mi frente / y no los quiero matar," porque son parte de su pasado, y mientras pasen por su frente, ellos—y él—siguen vivos: perduran como parte de su pasado, y él sigue viviendo para recordarlos. No obstante, concluir "[. . .] aunque paséis por mi frente / —¡seguid!—, no os puedo matar," es subrayar, de un modo elegíaco, la imposibilidad de volver a hacer de hombre lo que él hacía de niño, señalando de nuevo la doble función paradójica de la memoria, que es a la vez sepulturera y salvadora. De niño, uno puede matar murciélagos; de mayor, uno no puede ni debe matar el recuerdo de haber matado murciélagos. Lo que pertenece, muerto, al pasado sigue, vivo, en la mente. Si "no os puedo matar" lamenta el pretérito irrecuperable, "no los quiero matar" mantiene vivo el pretérito irrecuperable.

El recordar, entonces, para Alberti—como para tantos otros—es una obligación, y el definir la memoria es otra. Las diversas definiciones que él nos ofrece a través de su obra, y especialmente en su libro más proustiano, *Retornos de lo vivo lejano* (1948-1956), son

testimonio de una fascinación por la memoria que compartía con tantos escritores—por ejemplo, Antonio Machado, María Teresa León y, en la actualidad, Antonio Muñoz Molina y José Saramago—con la salvedad de que no solamente intenta captar su funcionamiento sino registrar las reacciones, a veces conflictivas, que despierta en él tener una memoria tan densa. La súplica que pronuncia en *Canciones del Alto Valle del Aniene*:

> Dejadme sólo un momento
> que me lleve, sin memoria,
> lejos, este aire, (*Oc* III 206)

atribuye a la memoria un peso que él tiene por una bendición tanto como por una maldición. Su comentario acerca de Dámaso Alonso—"Su memoria era inmensa—aún más de la que yo padezco" (*Arboleda* [1959]155)—señala el cariz negativo de la memoria, que él representa metafóricamente como un tipo de vía dolorosa, aludiendo en *La arboleda perdida* a "los tupidos senderos de la memoria" (*Arboleda* [1959] 121) y en *Retornos de lo vivo lejano* a "las empinadas cuestas de la memoria" (*Oc* II 499).

Sin embargo, poder evocar el pasado es analgésico, según él pone en claro en otro poema de esa obra, donde exclama, aliviado:

> ¡Qué consuelo sin nombre no perder la memoria,
> tener llenos los ojos de los tiempos pasados [. . .]! (*Oc* II 510)

Mientras su declaración, en otro poema de la misma obra—"elijo lo que más me revive llamándome"—indica un proceso selectivo, su alusión a "(Estas perdidas ráfagas que vuelven sin aviso [. . .])" (*Oc* II 499, 487) señala la naturaleza imprevisible, antojadiza de la memoria, algo que también fascina a José Saramago, que ha escrito en *Las pequeñas memorias*:

> Muchas veces olvidamos lo que nos gustaría poder recordar, otras veces, recurrentes, obsesivas, reaccionando ante el mínimo estímulo, nos llegan del pasado imágenes, palabras sueltas, fulgores, iluminaciones, y no hay explicación para ello, no las hemos convocado, pero ahí están. (169)[7]

En la mente de Alberti, la memoria puede ser removida por colores, por sonidos—como el de trenes que en Argentina "van hacia el Guadarrama" (*Oc* II 729)—o por una hoja que agita la brisa, según aclara en un pasaje esperanzador de "Retornos del amor en los vividos paisajes:"

> Pero basta el más leve palpitar de una hoja,
> una estrella borrada que respira de pronto
> para vernos los mismos alegres que llenamos
> los lugares que juntos nos tuvieron. (*Oc* II 512)

Si una hoja que mueve la brisa trae esperanza, las hojas que arranca el viento traen otros recuerdos, y el canto que entona en *Baladas y canciones del Paraná* a las hojas caídas es una elegía al paso del tiempo representado en *Sobre los ángeles* por "[. . .] esas hojas tenaces que se estampan en los zapatos" y por esa ecuación tal elocuente de "Una hoja, un hombre" (*Oc* I 442, 437). Las preguntas que él dirige a las hojas caídas, y que enmarcan el poema, son conmovedoras por las negativas que conllevan:

> Hojas caídas, ¿puedo hablaros,
> desear algo de vosotras?
>
> Secas hermanas, otros tiempos,
> tenaces en mis suelas rotas.
>
> De noche, siempre en mis zapatos
> persistíais mojadas, solas.
>
> ¿Puedo encontrar, hojas de hoy,
> una de ayer entre vosotras? (*Oc* II 750)

Querer encontrar una hoja de ayer entre las de hoy es querer aferrarse al pasado al mismo tiempo que conmemora su estado pretérito, condición que T. S. Eliot definió como "pastness" en su célebre ensayo "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (49). A diferencia de Jose Ángel Valente, que advierte en *Poemas a Lázaro* de que "no vuelvas la mirada. / No podemos volvernos," Rafael Alberti declara en *Pleamar*: "[. . .] yo sé [. . .] que debo / recordar ciertas cosas" (*Oc* II 173). Compartiendo la convicción expresada por María Teresa

León de que "Vivir no es tan importante como recordar" (130), él, en *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*, enfrenta al Olvido y al Recuerdo en un combate alegórico, que gana el último:

> Pensé ponerle a mi casa
> de campo un nombre: El Olvido.
>
> Pero pensé: ¡qué buen nombre
> para los que mal me quieren
> y se llaman mis amigos!
>
> Le di otro nombre: El Recuerdo.
> Y di El Olvido al olvido. (*Oc* II 750)

Todos podríamos decir, como ha dicho Alberti en *El matador*, "Pero soy [. . .] No, no soy. Dejadme decir: era" (*Oc* II 931), porque todos tenemos nuestro propio pasado, o, según ha indicado Emilio Lledó: "Somos porque hemos sido."[8] Con el paso de los años, lo que hemos sido afecta y modula cada vez más intensamente lo que somos, con la consecuencia de que muchos vivimos mirando hacia atrás. Sin embargo, si pocos tenemos el talento o la vocación de convertir nuestro pasado en poesía, por lo menos podemos hacer lo que Alberti propone escuetamente como solución al hecho triste pero humano de que él era: "Recordar." Es una medida que, mientras enlaza el pasado y el presente, da al pasado un porvenir. Recordar, preconiza Rafael Alberti; mejor aún es lo que hace él: escribir recordando.[9]

Notas

1. "Ayer se fue; mañana no ha llegado" es un verso del magistral soneto "'¡Ah de la vida!' [. . .] ¿Nada me responde?"

2. "Repeatedly with only minor variants the same bygone."

3. "[. . .] there is in memory, necessarily, a sense of loss: we look back to a country to which we cannot return."

4. "Matemáticas. Latín" es el título de un apartado de las memorias de Francisco Ayala, el que sentía por esas asignaturas la misma repugnancia que Alberti, con quien compartía la condición humillante de "externo," adoptando el hacer rabonas como medida contra la indiferencia de "los buenos padres escolapios" (49).

5. "We find a simple concrete event that stands for a major theme in our life, that summarizes a whole cluster of meanings."

6. "[. . .] we reconstruct the past to make it consistent with what we know in the present." Esa costumbre la define Shacter como "predisposición retrospectiva" ("hindsight bias").

7. En la misma obra, que es al fin y al cabo una celebración de la memoria, Saramago alude al "ovillo enmarañado de la memoria" (17), al "poder reconstructor de la memoria" (20), a "las brumas de la memoria" (126) y a su contrincante, los "aluviones de olvido" (47).

8. Dijo Lledó acerca de la memoria: "Somos porque hemos sido, sin memoria somos seres neutros, etéreos, vacíos. La memoria es maestra de la vida, no de la nostalgia, sino del futuro. La memoria es la sensación y lo que queda de las sensaciones en el alma y el lenguaje, en los latidos del corazón."

9. Este ensayo es una versión revisada de la ponencia que dicté en el Congreso Internacional Rafael Alberti y su tiempo, que se celebró en Madrid del 24 al 28 de noviembre de 2003. Agradezco a la Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales su invitación a participar.

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El recuerdo fracturado de la Guerra Civil española: trauma individual y colectivo en *La prima Angélica*

Andrés Pérez Simón
University of Toronto

> Supongamos, y es un ejemplo un tanto banal, que si para Proust su infancia es una serie de detalles más o menos poéticos en torno a un ambiente familiar, para mí esos recuerdos son mucho más violentos: es una bomba que cae en mi colegio, y una niña ensangrentada con cristales en la cara. Y eso no es una invención literaria, es un hecho real. Por eso yo creo que esa atmósfera de la guerra de alguna forma gravita, o debe gravitar, sobre mí, y por consecuencia tiene que gravitar sobre las cosas que hago.
>
> Carlos Saura

En el presente ensayo analizaré la película *La prima Angélica* (1973), del director español Carlos Saura, haciendo especial énfasis en la relación entre la fallida memoria del personaje de Luis y el trauma colectivo de la Guerra Civil española. En *La prima Angélica*, filme galardonado con el Premio del Jurado en el festival de Cannes, Saura cuestiona la historia oficial legitimada por el régimen de Franco sin necesidad de acudir a una retórica abiertamente política. De un modo similar a la magdalena proustiana, pasado y presente chocan abruptamente en la mente de Luis (José Luis López Vázquez), un hombre de edad madura que es asaltado por recuerdos de opresión sexual y adoctrinamiento religioso durante una breve visita a Segovia, ciudad en la que vivió los años de la Guerra Civil (1936–1939) junto a la familia de su tía materna. En 1973, casi cuarenta años después de la contienda, Luis vuelve a Segovia para trasladar los restos de su difunta madre al panteón familiar.

Saura lleva a cabo desplazamientos temporales desde 1973 a 1936 pero, en contra de la convención realista, hace que sea el mismo actor

el que represente los papeles de niño en 1936 y adulto en 1973, sin recurrir a ningún tipo de maquillaje o cambio de ropa. Como consecuencia de esto, las transiciones temporales no se corresponden con una gama distinta de significantes en el cuerpo del personaje, excepto los signos faciales y el tono de voz que maneja López Vázquez.

El presente ensayo se compone de tres partes. En la primera sección comienzo por situar la Guerra Civil española en el contexto histórico-político de la época, para después explicar la singularidad de *La prima Angélica* en relación con el resto de la filmografía de Saura. En la segunda parte analizo el procedimiento a través del cual el director español vulnera las convenciones cinematográficas que distinguen entre pasado y presente, y el modo en el que Saura privilegia el recuerdo individual por encima de la historia oficial. En la tercera y última sección de este ensayo propongo una revisión fenomenológica de *La prima Angélica*, en consonancia con el afán que Saura muestra por incorporar las experiencias del pasado en el horizonte de comprensión del presente. Junto a Jan Mukarovský, quien desarrolla la dualidad artefacto/objeto estético en el seno de la Escuela de Praga, me referiré a la historicidad de la comprensión en los términos establecidos por Gadamer. Trataré además de incorporar una aproximación hermenéutica desde el campo de la teoría del trauma.

Hasta la fecha, han sido dos los autores que más atención han prestado al problema de la memoria en *La prima Angélica*. Ignacio Sánchez Vidal analiza la película en su estudio *El cine de Carlos Saura* (1988), publicado hace casi ya dos décadas; mientras que Vicente Sánchez-Biosca presta especial atención al filme en su reciente libro sobre el cine y la guerra civil española (2006). Sánchez Vidal incorpora documentación muy relevante para comprender la génesis y la recepción del filme de Saura, desde extractos del guión original hasta artículos publicados por la prensa franquista. Sánchez-Biosca, por su parte, estudia *La caza* y *La prima Angélica* en un capítulo de su libro que se titula, muy significativamente, "La España imposible: traumas, retornos y exilios." Además, la compilación de entrevistas publicada por Linda M. Willem en 2003 constituye un excelente punto de partida para conocer las poéticas de Saura. Reconociendo la importancia de estos estudios previos, me propongo profundizar en la forma en la que la ruptura de la convención realista en *La prima Angélica* se articula mediante una relación dialéctica con la fragilidad de la memoria del personaje de Luis.

Para facilitar la comprensión de este ensayo a los lectores no familiarizados con la Guerra Civil española, presentaré a continuación un breve resumen de la historia de la contienda bélica. El 14 de abril de 1931, el rey Alfonso XIII abandona el poder después de un significativo ascenso de los partidos republicanos en las elecciones municipales, celebradas dos días antes. El exilio del rey marca el comienzo de la II República, un ambicioso proyecto democrático que se irá erosionando paulatinamente hasta desembocar en la guerra de 1936. A finales de 1931, el nuevo parlamento aprueba una Constitución que altera considerablemente la estructura socioeconómica de España. Entre otras medidas, se instituye el carácter laico de la nación, se requisan tierras de la iglesia y se otorga el voto a las mujeres. Esta política reformista, con Manuel Azaña al mando del gobierno, encuentra la oposición de los sectores más conservadores, afines a la iglesia y a los terratenientes. Conviene tener en cuenta que el comienzo de los años treinta no es precisamente el mejor periodo para el nacimiento de una democracia liberal en Europa, ya que Mussolini y Hitler están en el poder en Italia y Alemania, respectivamente, y Stalin hace lo propio en la Unión Soviética. Después de la victoria de las fuerzas de la izquierda —el frente popular— en las elecciones de febrero de 1936, varios sectores del ejército español comienzan a planificar un golpe de Estado. En los últimos días de la II República, el socialista Largo Caballero llega al gobierno y anuncia la inminente "dictadura del proletariado," mientras se suceden las agresiones y actos vandálicos contra periódicos y organizaciones de izquierda y derecha. El 17 de julio de 1936, tres militares dirigen un levantamiento militar: José Sanjurjo, Emilio Mola y Francisco Franco. Aunque el golpe de Estado es reprimido por las autoridades, el levantamiento da lugar al estallido de la Guerra Civil. El 18 de julio, un día después del alzamiento, el país está ya sumido en la guerra fratricida.

El 1 de octubre de 1936, Franco es nombrado jefe de Estado en la ciudad de Burgos. El nombramiento tiene lugar a menos de tres meses del estallido de la guerra, cuando España está todavía dividida entre el bando nacional y el republicano, éste último todavía gobierno legítimo de la II República. El bando nacional, dirigido por Franco, va sumando territorios hasta conquistar Madrid el 1 de abril de 1939, fecha oficial del final de la contienda. La victoria de las fuerzas conservadoras habría sido imposible sin el apoyo logístico de los ejércitos italiano y alemán, que utilizan España como un banco de pruebas de lo que luego será

la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Por el contrario, el bando republicano no recibe el apoyo de las democracias occidentales, ya que Francia, Reino Unido y Estados Unidos se declaran neutrales tras el estallido del conflicto. Ante la falta de apoyo de estas naciones, la República pasa a depender casi exclusivamente de la Unión Soviética, que suministra armamento bélico a un alto coste, y condiciona las decisiones del agonizante gobierno republicano a las políticas dictadas desde Moscú.

Se estima que en estos tres años mueren al menos medio millón de personas, y tras el final de la guerra se inicia una dictadura que se extiende hasta 1975, año de la muerte de Franco. A pesar de sus afinidades con los fascistas, el gobierno español no llega a participar en la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Al hacerse inminente la derrota de Italia y Alemania, Franco lleva a cabo un progresivo alejamiento de las dos naciones que tanto le habían ayudado a conquistar el poder. En la década de los cuarenta, Franco impone a la población los valores ultraconservadores del denominado "nacionalcatolicismo" pero, al mismo tiempo, se preocupa de que su ideología no sea tachada de fascista por las potencias aliadas. Este viraje ideológico se hace patente en la propia industria cinematográfica, puesto que se pasa de la retórica totalitaria en filmes propagandísticos como *Raza* y *Rojo y negro*, ambos de 1942, a una significativa "ausencia de referencias [a la guerra] entre 1943 y 1949" (Sánchez-Biosca 149). En la década de los cincuenta, el régimen franquista obtiene la legitimación de los Estados Unidos, especialmente a partir de los tratados de 1953, al cimentar su proyecto de Estado en la defensa de la civilización cristiana ante el ateismo de la Unión Soviética.[1]

Tanto en la guerra como en la posguerra, la iglesia española aparece como un pilar fundamental en el aparato de legitimación ideológica de las autoridades franquistas. No hay sector de la vida sociocultural, desde el sistema educativo a la censura de películas, que no sea controlado por representantes de la iglesia católica. La ya mencionada idea del nacionalcatolicismo, peculiar adaptación del nacionalsocialismo hitleriano, evidencia hasta qué punto religión y política marchan unidas en el régimen de Franco. En las escuelas, las iglesias y los medios de comunicación se legitima el levantamiento militar alegando que el golpe franquista fue en realidad una "cruzada" cristiana contra la amenaza comunista y atea de la II República.

Cuando estalla la guerra, en julio de 1936, Saura cuenta apenas con cuatro años de edad. Entre 1936 y 1939 vive junto a su familia

los sufrimientos de la contienda en Madrid, Valencia y Barcelona. El recuerdo de aquellos años de dolor e incertidumbre quedará marcado para siempre en el futuro director de cine.[2] En 1974, un año después de terminar *La prima Angélica*, Saura habla así de sus recuerdos de infancia y del personaje de Luis:

> Nunca he estado de acuerdo, tal vez a causa de mi experiencia personal, con esa afirmación comúnmente extendida que asegura que la infancia es la época dorada de la vida. Me parece, por el contrario, que la infancia es una época particularmente insegura, porque, entre otras cosas, es vivida enteramente por un mundo interpuesto, que se desarrolla a través de grandes miedos, de carencias de todo tipo. Y todo esto deja una huella profunda, imborrable, sobre todo cuando, como en el personaje de mi película, tiene que vivir en el seno de un medio hostil. (Saura citado en Sánchez Vidal 84)

La Prima Angélica no constituye el único trabajo del cineasta aragonés en el que está presente el recuerdo de la guerra fratricida. De diferente manera, el trauma de la contienda aparece también en *La caza* (1965), *El jardín de las delicias* (1970), *Dulces horas* (1981) y *¡Ay Carmela!* (1990). En *La caza*, Saura aborda el tema de manera indirecta para poder evitar la censura franquista. El mismo título de la película sugiere ya la semejanza entre salir a matar conejos y asesinar republicanos, sobre todo teniendo en cuenta que el paraje al que acuden los cuatro amigos fue escenario de la guerra. Además, uno de los cazadores es un consumado francotirador que destacó en las filas nacionales.[3] En cambio, en *El jardín de las delicias*, *La prima Angélica* y *Dulces horas* el director español examina el trauma colectivo de la Guerra Civil a través de los recuerdos y vivencias de sus personajes, quienes sufren de amnesia y se sienten frustrados al intentar reconstruir su pasado vital. En *¡Ay Carmela!*, ya quince años después de la muerte de Franco, Saura aborda sin tapujos el tema de la guerra mediante una comedia que transcurre linealmente hacia un final trágico.

El jardín de las delicias y *La prima Angélica* representan la culminación de un progresivo alejamiento de Saura respecto del realismo imperante en el cine español durante los años cincuenta y principios de los sesenta. Hasta bien entrados los sesenta, la posibilidad de combatir

la ideología oficial parecía únicamente posible mediante de la adaptación de motivos del neorrealismo italiano. Como señala Juan Cobos, en películas como *Ladrón de bicicletas* (1948), de Vittorio de Sica, "[. . .] había paro, seres ateridos, infraviviendas, niños que trabajaban antes de la edad sin poder acudir al colegio, carencia de aguas en las casas [. . .]" (61), elementos que convenientemente trasplantados a la realidad española dejan abierto cierto espacio de denuncia. En literatura, el realismo de posguerra monopoliza la mayor parte de la escena artística hasta principios de los sesenta, cuando llegan nuevas corrientes europeas y la novela del *boom* latinoamericano. *El Jarama*, novela publicada por Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio en 1962, constituye un ejemplo extremo de realismo literario, lindante con el conductismo. En *El Jarama*, el narrador imita a una cámara que registra desde fuera el día de unos muchachos en el río. Como resultado de ello, el lector tiene que inferir la psicología de los personajes a partir de sus movimientos y acciones, ya que carece de acceso a la mente de éstos. En sus inicios como director, Saura se muestra fascinado por esta manera de retratar las estancadas vidas de los jóvenes españoles dando prioridad al *showing* ante el *telling*. Como señala Agustín Sánchez Vidal, el montaje final de la película *Los golfos* (1959–1962) contiene una escena del río Manzanares que supone un homenaje a *El Jarama*, "[. . .] novela que Saura quiso adaptar durante algún tiempo" (29).

Tras sus dos primeras películas, *Los golfos* y *Llanto por un bandido* (1963), *La caza* marca el inicio del periodo de madurez estética de Saura. Aunque *La caza* se sustenta en un estatuto de ficción escrupulosamente realista, es éste el primer filme en el que Saura se aleja de postulados objetivistas o neorrealistas. Resulta muy significativo que, en distintos momentos de la película, el director aragonés incluya planos de los protagonistas acompañados por su monólogo interior. Se trata de la primera película en la que Saura trabaja con Elías Querejeta, quien tras fundar su productora en 1963, le ofrecerá apoyo económico, protección ante la censura del régimen y ayuda en la difusión de su obra en festivales internacionales (Caparrós 139–144).

La carencia de identidad del individuo que pierde su memoria resulta patente en *El jardín de las delicias*. En esta película, la familia del empresario Antonio Cano intenta hacerle recuperar la memoria después de su accidente de coche, no tanto por compasión hacia el hombre sino por un motivo mucho más mundano: se trata de que Cano recuerde el número de la cuenta bancaria en Suiza en la que

guarda su dinero. Para combatir la amnesia del personaje, los familiares de Cano escenifican distintos episodios de su vida con la esperanza de activar su recuerdo. Éste es el primer filme de Saura en el que los actores José Luis López Vázquez y Lina Canalejas representan dos edades distintas sin que tenga lugar cambio alguno de maquillaje o de ropa. En *La prima Angélica*, Saura elige a los mismos actores para explotar este recurso antiilusionista de una manera mucho más ambiciosa. El potencial semántico de este último trabajo nace precisamente de la interrelación entre la técnica fílmica y el tema que Saura plantea: la fragilidad de la memoria. Una gran diferencia entre las dos películas es que, mientras que la convención realista no se ve amenazada en *El jardín de las delicias*, resulta mucho más complicado definir el estatuto ontológico de varias escenas en *La Prima Angélica*. Saura construye la primera película a partir de la focalización externa, para luego presentar "the exteriorized dramatization of memory and history" (Vernon 129) mediante unos personajes que presentan breves obras teatrales ante el amnésico Antonio Cano. En cambio, *La prima Angélica* contiene momentos de focalización interna que dan lugar a la inclusión de imágenes oníricas—por ejemplo, la escena inicial del bombardeo del colegio—que se pueden asignar a la falible mente de Luis.

Iniciaré la segunda parte de este ensayo con un resumen argumental de la película, para después proceder a analizar algunas escenas específicas. Después de la mencionada escena del bombardeo, el espectador presencia la exhumación de los restos de un cadáver en el monasterio de Montjuic en Barcelona. Los huesos contenidos en la bolsa son los de la madre de Luis, fallecida veinte años atrás. La idea de Luis es llevar los restos hasta Segovia, ciudad originaria de su madre, para depositarlos en el panteón familiar según la voluntad de ella. La vuelta a Segovia sume a Luis en un estado de ansiedad y desconcierto, después de casi cuatro décadas sin visitar la pequeña ciudad castellana. El hombre se siente desorientado al revivir el dolor que experimentó en esta ciudad durante el verano de 1936, cuando sus padres lo dejaron con la familia de su tía Pilar mientras ellos se quedaban en Madrid. Lo que en principio iba a ser una simple estancia veraniega se convirtió en una traumática separación después de estallar la Guerra Civil.

La vuelta a Segovia reaviva en Luis los complejos no superados de su niñez: el amor hacia su prima Angélica, que ahora es una mujer y cuya hija, también llamada Angélica, le recuerda a la niña que

conoció; el temor a la sexualidad inculcado por los curas en Segovia; y el miedo hacia la rígida figura del padre, quien como comunista y ateo fue responsable de las matanzas de la guerra a ojos de la familia de su madre. El niño Luisito, tremendamente dependiente de su madre, tuvo que ver como ésta volvía a Madrid mientras él quedaba con una familia de fuertes convicciones religiosas, una familia que apoyó el levantamiento militar contra la II República.

Las memorias de estos años asaltan al Luis adulto a lo largo de toda la película, bien a través de un estímulo sensorial, como cuando oye a su tía tocar una canción en el piano; o al encontrarse con un conocido de la infancia, como el antiguo compañero de colegio Felipe Sagún, quien es un sacerdote en 1973. Sin embargo, no se trata únicamente de un doloroso proceso de descubrimiento individual, ya que hacia el final del filme la adulta Angélica se derrumba y le confiesa su frustración vital. Su matrimonio con Anselmo carece de sentido más allá de las apariencias de familia burguesa, motivo por el que Angélica busca desesperadamente consuelo en Luis, el primo a quien no había visto durante más de cuarenta años. Luis, quien a sus años sigue soltero y parece insensible a cualquier afecto, rechaza en un primer momento a Angélica. Sin embargo, no podrá evitar los recuerdos de su amor infantil en las últimas escenas de la película, en las cuales la ambigüedad hace imposible distinguir con total seguridad qué acontecimientos pertenecen a 1936 y cuáles a 1973.

La tensión semántica que se produce cuando dos actores de edad madura representan tanto a unos niños como a unos adultos llega a su punto culminante en la escena 24. Luis y Angélica adulta suben a la buhardilla de su tía para buscar recuerdos de su niñez y, tras encontrar unos cuadernos escolares, comienzan a leerlos sentados en el tejado. En este momento de la película, el espectador ya sabe que la mujer está siendo engañada por su marido Anselmo, ya que ella misma ha confesado su infelicidad a Luis durante un momento de intimidad. Los dos adultos comienzan a besarse en el tejado hasta que una voz masculina llama a Angélica desde el interior de la casa. Sin embargo, no se trata de su marido sino de Miguel, el padre de la niña Angélica en 1936, quien viste la camisa azul de la Falange Española. Se ha producido un nuevo deslizamiento temporal dentro de una misma escena, sin ninguna indicación formal por parte de Saura. Pero, más allá de este recurso técnico, queda una pregunta imposible de contestar con total certeza: ¿son Luis y la mujer Angélica los que se han

besado o, al contrario, se trata de un beso infantil entre Luisito y la niña Angélica? Es el espectador el único que puede interpretar este espacio de indeterminación.

Como ya se ha indicado, Saura propone una reescritura de las técnicas cinematográficas canónicas. Pasado y presente se entrelazan en *La prima Angélica*, mientras el personaje de Luis es asaltado por recuerdos de la opresión ideológica, religiosa y sexual que tuvo que sufrir en la España de los tardíos años treinta. En *La prima Angélica* se suceden escenas pertenecientes a 1973 y 1936 pero, en ciertos momentos, los dos tiempos confluyen sin necesidad de marcadores canónicos de transición temporal. Pero, ¿qué técnicas utiliza Saura para apartarse de las convenciones cinematográficas? Para Justo Villafañe y Norberto Mínguez, una de las operaciones convencionalmente asociadas al salto atrás en el tiempo es el "cambio de aspecto (vestimenta, apariencia visual, edad) del personaje narrador al ser representado visualmente en el *flashback*" (204). Otro procedimiento para transmitir cambio de tiempo en el cine realista consiste en alterar el ambiente sonoro. Estas dos operaciones o, mejor dicho, la violación de estas dos normas convencionales, adquieren una importancia capital en *La prima Angélica*.

Para comprender este ataque a las convenciones fílmicas, es necesario tener en cuenta los roles del plano y de la escena en la idea moderna de montaje, desarrollada fundamentalmente a partir de la segunda década del siglo pasado. A nadie escapa que, después de directores como David W. Griffith y Sergei M. Eisenstein, el concepto de montaje se constituye como un elemento central del arte fílmico. Si en los comienzos del cine la cámara permanece inmóvil mientras registra la acción de los actores, con el avance del montaje las escenas pasan a ser concebidas como un ensamblaje de planos. Los planos se organizan como partes de una unidad superior, la escena, que sigue funcionando como un continuo espacio-temporal. La composición de escenas mediante planos hace necesaria la institución del *raccord*, que no es sino el "[. . .] elemento que permite al espectador orientarse en el espacio diegético y que hace que esos cambios de plano con continuidad o proximidad espacial apenas sean perceptibles" (Villafañe y Mínguez 210). Para mantener la continuidad entre planos hay que mantener distintos tipos de *raccord*, como son los de iluminación, los de sonido, y la posición de los personajes. En *La prima Angélica*, Saura vulnera especialmente el *raccord* de posición, el cual indica que los personajes siguen estando en el mismo lugar aunque no estén

visibles en el plano. En contra de esta operación, Saura cambia la distribución de personajes al abrir y cerrar los planos, ya que sustituye a los personajes de 1973 por ellos mismos en 1936. Esta alteración de la continuidad temporal se hace especialmente patente en la segunda mitad de la película, a partir del momento en el que Luis vuelve a Segovia después de haber intentado huir en un primer momento.

Para explicar este procedimiento, analizaré a continuación la tercera escena de *La prima Angélica*, en la que el pasado y el presente de Luis se confunden por primera vez. A punto de llegar a Segovia desde Barcelona, Luis detiene el coche para andar un poco y observar desde lejos la ciudad que no visita desde hace décadas. Saura combina entonces una panorámica del campo con Segovia a lo lejos, que se corresponde con la visión subjetiva de Luis, con planos externos del personaje caminando por la carretera. Cuando oye el ruido de un coche que se detiene fuera de escena, Luis gira el cuello hacia su derecha y, al mismo tiempo, Saura abre el enfoque de la cámara para dar a conocer qué está sucediendo. Al abrirse el plano, puede verse a los padres de Luis bajarse de un coche antiguo, ataviados con ropa de los años treinta. La madre moja un pañuelo en agua de colonia y lo aplica a Luis, mientras le dice que así le pasará el mareo por el viaje en coche. En este momento, José Luis López Vázquez no está representado el papel de Luis, un adulto apático e introspectivo, sino el de Luisito, un niño nervioso e inseguro.

Después de que la madre alivie el mareo de Luisito, éste pronuncia sus primeras palabras en la película. Debido a su relevancia, creo necesario citar este diálogo inicial entre el niño y sus padres:

> Luisito: Mamá, yo no quiero ir con la abuela. Quiero quedarme con vosotros.
> Madre: Lo mismo dijiste el verano pasado. Menuda llorera. Y luego lo bien que lo pasaste. ¿Ya no te acuerdas? Este año eres mayor y no vas a llorar, ¿verdad?
> L: Yo quiero estar siempre con vosotros.
> M: No es posible, hijo. Enseguida vendremos a buscarte. Un mes pasa enseguida. No seas tonto.
> Padre: ¡Vamos, Luisa, que se hace tarde!
> M: Lo vas a pasar estupendamente. Acuérdate el año pasado: no querías volver a Madrid.
> P: Sí, hombre, sí, ¡como Dios lo vas a pasar con esas brujas!

Cuando Luisito y su madre hablan cara a cara, Saura los presenta desde un plano muy corto, casi un primer plano. Sin embargo, lo que más me interesa es hacer notar el rendimiento semántico que obtiene el director cuando muestra, a través de un plano general, a los tres personajes camino del coche familiar. Considero que, en este momento, Saura ya ha trazado las líneas básicas en la correlación de fuerzas. Por un lado aparece la madre, que trata con cariño a su hijo mientras se esfuerza en rescribir sus recuerdos para así paliar el trauma de la separación ("¿Ya no te acuerdas?" "Acuérdate el año pasado"). Por el otro lado, el autoritario padre interviene primero para cortar la conversación y, después, para desacreditar las palabras de la mujer ("¡como Dios lo vas a pasar con esas brujas!"). Y, finalmente, emerge Luisito, el hijo que sólo se atreve a comunicar sus sentimientos ante su madre y que, cuando interviene el padre, se muestra sumiso. Es evidente que Saura se aleja de los patrones del cine realista al combinar dos espacios y tiempos distintos. Junto a esta maniobra puede detectarse un segundo procedimiento antiilusionista, el cual consiste en la repetición parcial de una escena de la película. En la primera escena del filme se observa a unos niños entre los escombros de un colegio bombardeado, con la imagen acompañada por una música de coro religioso que ha sido incorporada en el proceso de montaje. Esta escena reaparece en el tramo final de la película con variaciones en el color de la imagen y, sobre todo, con el sonido de las bombas al caer sobre el colegio.[4] La imposibilidad de esclarecer por completo la ontología de estas imágenes (¿son alucinaciones de Luis? ¿Son recuerdos fidedignos?) muestra de qué modo la técnica fílmica entra en estrecha relación con la imposibilidad de reconstruir unos recuerdos traumáticos.

Creo que el estudio de la situación psíquica de Luis puede beneficiarse de la aplicación de los últimos desarrollos en la teoría del trauma, como los propuestos por Angelika Rauch, en una línea que incorpora la tradición hermenéutica de Gadamer. Rauch aplica el concepto de historicidad de la comprensión a la práctica del psicoanálisis, reclamando así la importancia del sujeto interpretativo en relación con el hecho que originó el trauma. En palabras de Rauch: "Emphasis on the reality of traumatic shock (as abuse, stress, accident, and so on), however important it may be, loses sight of a hermeneutic dimension of psychoanalytic therapy [. . .] the question of how meanings are associated or bound to the understanding of life's events" (112). Werner Bohleber, en un reciente trabajo sobre la reconstrucción del

recuerdo y el psicoanálisis, ha incidido en el hecho de que "[. . .] el análisis de trastornos tempranos nos ha enseñado cuán deformado y distorsionado puede estar el material autobiográfico por los procesos de escisión" (110). De su estudio se deduce que la reaparición de recuerdos traumáticos en el paciente no consiste en un simple fenómeno de "repeticiones puras" (120), sino que hay distintos factores conscientes o inconscientes que alteran estos *flashbacks*. En el caso concreto de *La prima Angélica*, puede observarse que los recuerdos de Luis están lejos de ser exactos en numerosas ocasiones. La vuelta a la casa de su tía se traduce en recuerdos como la ejecución de su padre por parte de un pelotón de fusilamiento franquista. Sin embargo, este *flashback* no se corresponde con la realidad, pues el padre sigue vivo en 1973. De un modo similar, una visita al salón de actos de su antiguo colegio le hace recordar la película *Los ojos de Londres*, pero las imágenes que ahora cree volver a ver no pertenecen a una película de misterio sino a un apocalíptico filme de ciencia ficción.

Quiero iniciar ahora la tercera y última sección de este ensayo, en la que compararé mi interpretación de la película con la recepción original de 1973. Hay que tener muy en cuenta que, al evitar una configuración unívoca y cerrada, Saura plantea *La prima Angélica* como una estructura artística deliberadamente abierta a la concretización del espectador. Siguiendo la terminología propuesta por Jan Mukarovský, puede afirmarse que el artefacto permanece invariable mientras que el objeto estético en 2007 es diferente al que la comunidad receptora produjo después del estreno de la película en 1974. Mukarovský se adelanta varias décadas a la Estética de la Recepción cuando afirma a finales de los años treinta:

> Al juzgar una obra artística, no juzgamos el artefacto material, sino el 'objeto estético,' que es el equivalente inmaterial de dicho artefacto en nuestra conciencia, resultado del encuentro de los estímulos generados por la obra con la tradición estética viva, que pertenece a la colectividad. El objeto estético está sujeto a cambios, aunque siempre se refiere a una misma obra material. Los cambios del objeto estético se producen cuando la obra penetra en nuevos ambientes sociales, diferentes del de su origen [. . .] En el curso del tiempo una obra materialmente idéntica puede asumir sucesivamente toda una serie de objetos estéticos muy diferentes

> entre sí, cada uno de los cuales corresponderá a otra etapa evolutiva de la estructura del arte dado. (225)

El espectador siempre activa su propia enciclopedia de conocimientos a la hora de dar sentido a la propuesta artística pero, y esto es un factor clave, nunca puede permanecer completamente ajeno a las circunstancias socioculturales de su propio tiempo. Por lo tanto, al preguntarse "¿qué significa *La prima Angélica*?" hay que tener en cuenta que la película está lejos de contener un significado oculto que permanece invariable ante el paso del tiempo. No es de extrañar que el propio Saura se niegue a contestar a esos entrevistadores que quieren oír de su boca la explicación "definitiva" (Willem xi) del significado de sus películas. El cineasta aragonés siempre ha mantenido que, una vez terminado el rodaje, corresponde al espectador determinar el potencial semántico de la película. En el caso de *La prima Angélica*, se puede comprobar que las respuestas del público han variado según la época. Después de su estreno en 1974, los grupos ultraderechistas atacaron varios cines en los que se proyectaba el filme porque consideraban que se trataba de una mofa directa a los sagrados valores nacionalcatólicos. Jesús Vasallo, periodista adscrito al régimen, criticó duramente a Saura por ridiculizar a la Falange Española (Sánchez Pascual 86). En la misma línea política, muchos izquierdistas españoles acogieron *La prima Angélica* como un ataque frontal a los ganadores de la Guerra Civil. Albert Turro, por ejemplo, destacó el "feroz anticlericalismo" de Saura en una crítica publicada después del estreno.

Treinta años después de la muerte de Franco, *La prima Angélica* sigue constituyendo el retrato del infierno personal de un niño durante la Guerra Civil española. Luis sigue traumatizado por una doble catástrofe: el enfrentamiento que destruye su país y da lugar a una larga dictadura, y la ruptura de la armonía familiar que se produce a causa de la división ideológica. Al volver a Segovia vuelve a experimentar el dolor de haberse separado de su madre durante los tres años de guerra, y de ver luego cómo la familia materna rompe toda relación con su padre debido a las inquietudes izquierdistas de éste. En 1973, cuando Saura termina la película, Franco gobierna todavía España y no es posible plantear un debate abierto sobre las causas de la contienda. La reacción de Luis al visitar Segovia muestra hasta qué punto este adulto ha interiorizado como pecado propio unos acontecimientos de los que en nada se le puede hacer responsable. La

imposibilidad de una reconstrucción colectiva del pasado condena a Luis a asumir una culpa que le ha sido impuesta desde fuera. Bohleber explica que esta autoinculpación es frecuente entre aquellos que han sido víctimas de catástrofes humanas y que no han tenido después acceso a un ejercicio de memoria colectiva:

> Engarzar tales experiencias traumáticas en un contexto narrativo no es algo que pueda conseguir el individuo particular en un acto idiosincrásico, sino que precisa también de un debate social sobre la verdad histórica del suceder traumático así como sobre su renegación y rechazo [. . .] En el caso de que predominen las tendencias sociales de rechazo o los pactos de silencio, los supervivientes traumatizados se quedan solos con sus experiencias. En vez de encontrar apoyo en la comprensión de los demás, es frecuente que sea la propia culpa la que se erija entre ellos en principio explicativo. (122–123)

Tras la muerte de Franco en 1975, se inicia un proceso de renovación de las estructuras políticas, sociales y económicas que culmina con la implantación de la democracia en España. Al desaparecer la dictadura, el espectador ya no confronta *La prima Angélica* como el drama de alguien a quien no se le permite voz propia, puesto que la situación política en España está normalizada. De ahí que la mayor amplitud de nuestra perspectiva actual facilite una interpretación de la película menos sujeta a condicionamientos ideológicos, sin necesidad de explicar cada escena como un ataque velado a la dictadura. Aunque la pervivencia del pasado en la mente de Luis remite a las heridas no cicatrizadas de la guerra, es posible leer hoy *La prima Angélica* en clave más intimista, anteponiendo el drama personal al colectivo. Conviene no olvidar que en la película la sexualidad del protagonista queda reprimida de por vida, ya que Luis sigue soltero y solitario en su edad adulta. No es casualidad que, en la escena de Luisito vestido de romano en la iglesia, el salto del presente al pasado se produzca mientras Luis observa el cuadro *San Sebastián* de José de Ribera. Esta pintura muestra el dolor del mártir y a la vez contiene un cierto grado de erotismo, ya que el santo aparece desnudo. Luisito, que coquetea con la niña Angélica en la iglesia, nunca podrá superar el sentimiento de culpa que le fue inculcado en su infancia.

Saura refuerza el dolor, la culpa y el deseo sexual de Luis/Luisito mediante el símbolo arquetípico de la sangre. La sangre, presente en el cuadro del santo traspasado por las flechas, también aparece en una pintura en casa de la tía Pilar. La tenebrosa imagen de una monja con llagas en las manos y un gusano saliendo del corazón no sólo aterra al niño Luisito, sino que pervive en las pesadillas cuando el hombre vuelve a Segovia en 1973. Precisamente, cuando Luis sufre esta pesadilla en la casa de su anciana tía se produce un salto temporal cargado de enorme significación. Después de despertarse asustado, el hombre va a la cocina para beber un vaso de agua y entonces advierte que unas gotas de sangre están cayendo junto a él. Cuando el plano se abre Saura muestra a la niña Angélica en 1936, con la mano en la nariz después de recibir supuestamente un golpe de Luisito. En el despertar sexual de los dos niños, esta sangre connota el tránsito de niña a mujer en Angélica.

La sumisión de Luis hacia la figura del padre también constituye otro poderoso elemento arquetípico.[5] Al igual que sucede con la represión eclesiástica, la lectura puramente ideológica no es la única que está contenida en la película. De vuelta a 1936, es evidente que la ideología del padre de Luisito ha provocado la separación de la familia, ya que la familia de la madre es conservadora y el padre es socialista. El adulto Luis nunca podrá superar el vacío de la figura paterna, como se muestra en el cementerio de Barcelona en la segunda escena del filme. La frialdad de las relaciones entre padre e hijo queda de manifiesto cuando el ya anciano progenitor no se molesta en salir del coche mientras Luis presencia de pie el traslado de los restos de su difunta madre. El miedo que Luis sufre hacia la figura del padre le lleva a confundir, de vuelta a Segovia, al marido de su prima Angélica con el tío falangista que conoció en 1936. Saura potencia esta confusión al utilizar al actor Fernando Delgado para los papeles de Anselmo (marido de Angélica en 1973) y Miguel (padre de la niña Angélica en 1936), aunque en este caso el actor cambia de atuendo y el cambio de tiempo resulta fácilmente identificable. Luis identifica al esposo de Angélica con el autoritario tío que participó en el alzamiento de julio del 36, porque para él estos dos personajes representan un mismo rol opresor. Es tal el trauma que sufre Luis que le resulta incapaz comprender que un hombre de cincuenta años en 1973 no pueda ser el mismo adulto en 1936, a pesar de que la familia intente demostrárselo con fotografías.

Luis identifica los dos roles masculinos porque en 1973 su sumisión ante el cabeza de familia no es política sino sexual, ya que todavía siente un deseo frustrado hacia la mujer que antes fue la niña Angélica. En la última escena de la película, Saura encierra a los dos hombres en la misma habitación después de que se produzca un último salto atrás en el tiempo: una patrulla militar ha capturado a Luisito y a la niña Angélica intentando huir de Segovia en bicicleta. El gran impacto de esta escena se debe al hecho de que Saura condensa las relaciones de poder que han estado latentes en toda la película. El fascista Miguel camina seguro de sí mismo, armado con un cinturón, dispuesto a castigar al indefenso Luisito. El niño aguanta los golpes arrodillado, ahogando sus gritos. Considerando que los dos personajes están representados por actores adultos, la escena puede interpretarse no sólo como el castigo de Miguel a Luisito, sino de Anselmo a Luis. En conclusión, puede hablarse de la interpretación actual de *La prima Angélica* en términos de un viraje hacia constantes antropológicas en detrimento de mensajes ideológicos coyunturales.

En su conocido relato "Pierre Menard, autor del Quijote," Borges concibe la historia de un imaginario escritor francés que vive obsesionado con escribir un libro que sea palabra por palabra igual que el de Cervantes. Para Menard, la cuestión no es escribir *otro* Quijote, sino *el* Quijote. Manuel Asensi ha descrito brillantemente el empeño de Menard como un conflicto entre dos hermenéuticas irreconciliables: por un lado, la idea de románticos como Novalis, quienes proclaman la necesidad de identificarse al completo con el autor original para poder comprenderlo; por el otro, la hermenéutica de Hans-Georg Gadamer, quien entiende el acto de lectura como una fusión de horizontes de sentido (249). Para Gadamer, como para Hans Robert Jauss y Paul Ricoeur después, la comprensión del pasado sólo es posible cuando el intérprete incorpora su propio horizonte de comprensión. El cine de Saura comparte esta convicción de que el acercamiento a un hecho pretérito carece de validez si no se incorpora la experiencia del presente. De ahí que el cineasta español recurra a un actor de edad adulta para representar a la vez los papeles de hombre y de niño en *La prima Angélica*. En palabras de Claire Clouzot, en el filme "[. . .] se siente así [. . .] la fusión entre el hombre y el niño, con la fuerza que el recuerdo tiene en el hombre adulto" (Clouzot citada en Sánchez Vidal 85). Como afirma el propio Saura en una entrevista concedida en 1988: "I proceed from the assumption that anyone without remembrances and past experiences is

a nonentity. Everybody is that which he has lived, and if he loses this, he remains naked, without any protection, devoid of everything. Therefore I always insist that one cannot deny that which he has lived; his memory must stay animated" (Saura citado en Zeul 107). La aparición de *La Prima Angélica* en 1973 se explica precisamente como un intento de reconstruir la memoria colectiva de España mediante la presentación del trauma individual del personaje de Luis. Tras la muerte de Franco, y una vez posibilitado un debate abierto sobre la guerra que dividió España, la dominante semántica de *La prima Angélica* apunta más al drama humano de un adulto que sigue siendo incapaz de disociar sus instintos sexuales del sentimiento de culpa que le fue inculcado durante su niñez.

Notas

1. Sánchez-Biosca explica cómo la Iglesia Católica se convirtió entonces en el principal agente de propaganda del régimen franquista, una vez que Franco se había alejado en la práctica de las versiones hispánicas del fascismo europeo—la Falange Española y las JONS. Como ejemplos de películas que exaltan los valores católicos ante la (supuesta) amenaza comunista, Sánchez-Biosca menciona: *La señora de Fátima* (1951), *Sor Intrépida* (1952), *La guerra de Dios* (1953), *El beso de Judas* (1953), *El canto del gallo* (1955) y *Un traje blanco* (1956). El cineasta Juan Antonio Bardem estrena *Muerte de un ciclista* en 1955, quizá la película que denuncia con mayor dureza la hipocresía burguesa y nacionalcatólica durante las tres primeras décadas del régimen franquista. No hay, en cualquier caso, mención explícita a la guerra en *Muerte de un ciclista*.

2. En 1978, Saura publica en la edición española de *Penthouse* unas notas bajo el título de "Recuerdo de una guerra civil," material en bruto del que tomará numerosas imágenes para sus películas.

3. La censura obligó a suprimir una escena en la que un cura presidía la matanza de un cerdo, porque se entendía que Saura estaba responsabilizando a la iglesia española de las muertes de la Guerra Civil. Otro aspecto relevante de *La caza* es que Luis Mayo, uno de los actores 'oficiales' del franquismo, interpreta en *La caza* el papel de empresario déspota que se ha enriquecido después de medrar. Es evidente que, para el público de la época, esta caracterización negativa de un actor pragmáticamente identificado con el régimen no podía pasar desapercibida. Además, el personaje que interpreta Mayo responde al nombre de Paco, una clara referencia a Francisco Franco que los organismos de censura no vieron o no se molestaron en señalar.

4. En la primera escena, en la que tanto el cura como los niños aparecen quietos durante segundos antes de ponerse en movimiento no se trata de imagen congelada, sino de unos actores que se quedan inmóviles. Los niños se muestran estáticos, de manera completamente antinatural, antes de ponerse en movimiento. Además, Saura elimina el sonido ambiente en esta escena inicial, algo que acentúa el efecto de irrealidad. Mientras que en la segunda escena del bombardeo se oyen todos los ruidos y gritos, estas primeras imágenes sólo vienen acompañadas por música de coro religioso, como ya he indicado. Por último, quiero referirme al color de la imagen como importante elemento antirrealista en la escena inicial. El comedor del colegio se muestra bajo un único tono grisáceo que elimina cualquier matiz en la pantalla. La única excepción que, por supuesto, no resulta casual, viene producida por el brillante color marrón de unas sillas que han permanecido inmunes al bombardeo. Gracias a sus conocimientos de fotografía, Saura consigue que el color de estas extrañas sillas sea el único que destaque entre la gama de grises. Según Sánchez-Biosca, esta escena "no estaba prevista en el guión" (219) y fue después del montaje final cuando Saura y Querejeta decidieron situarla al comienzo de la película.

5. Como afirman Jean Chevalier y Alain Gheerbrant sobre la autoritaria figura del padre: "He stands for all figures of authority in education, employment, the armed forces, the law, and for God himself. The role of the father is regarded as one which discourages attempts at independence and exercises an influence which impoversishes, constraints, undermines, renders impotent and makes submissive" (372).

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Labyrinth without Walls: The Uncanny and the Gothic Modes as Forms of Haunting in *La casa del padre* by Justo Navarro

Fiona Schouten
Radboud University Nijmegen

Only very recently, Spain has embraced the memory boom that currently characterizes most of the Western world, and started dealing with its traumatic past. The year 2006 was declared *Año de la memoria*, year of memory, and the themes of the Civil War of 1936-1939 and the ensuing dictatorship of Francisco Franco are inspiring a stream of publications, documentaries, parliamentary discussions, and scholarly investigations. This discourse of remembering forms quite a contrast to what came before. When Francisco Franco died in 1975, the general fear of a new war and the shared wish for democracy resulted in a politics of silence and consensus, to which both the powerful right and the recently legalized left agreed. Well into democratic times, this discourse of forgetting remains very viable in Spain. Now, however, a new discourse of remembering is successfully breaking the taboo on the past.

Contemporary Spanish literature has played its own part in breaking this taboo. Well-known authors such as Antonio Muñoz Molina, Javier Marías, Javier Cercas, Rafael Chirbes, and Álvaro Pombo have recently incorporated the war and the dictatorship into their literary works. Interestingly, studies of this type of works show that in them the past often returns as a process of haunting. Jo Labanyi, for instance, finds the ghosts of Spain's traumatic dictatorial past in simulacra, such as film stills and photographs, which she discovers in a host of contemporary Spanish novels and films: "Photographs, like film stills, play an important role as images of a fragmentary, discontinuous, spectral past" (69). And in a convincing study, Isabel Cuñado shows how haunting takes place in the works of contemporary Spanish author Javier Marías by searching for all elements that

cause estrangement: the double and photography, for example, but also antique books and other objects (31).

Haunting, or the spectral, is described by Fredric Jameson as "[. . .] what makes the present waver: the vibrations of a heat wave through which the massiveness of the object world—indeed of matter itself—now shimmers like a mirage" (38). Haunting processes in a novel cause a sense of a ghostly presence that goes above and beyond straightforward descriptions of the (fictional) object world. Rather than treating the past through a form of realism, such works often contain surreal and disturbing elements. It is remarkable, to say the least, that so many Spanish novels dealing with a traumatic past depart from realism and allow for haunting. Is this a symptom of the discourse of forgetting and consensus, which are still prompting Spanish authors to treat the painful theme in roundabout ways and only with the utmost delicacy?

Justo Navarro's novel, *La casa del padre* (1994), is yet another novel dealing with the traumatic Spanish past that departs from realistic conventions by incorporating disturbing elements. It contains "un poderoso claroscuro [visto] como a través de una cornucopia en la que los objetos se exaltan y la realidad entera aparece desfigurada por una distorsión de carácter expresionista, afín a la que tiene lugar en las novelas de terror" (Echevarría 153). Also, the novel is characterised by a "[. . .] frecuencia [. . .] de las asociaciones verbales, de la ambigüedad, de lo fantasmagórico, de lo monstruoso, de lo extraño" (Masoliver Ródenas 473). This article sets out to show how these elements open up the novel to haunting. It also intends to investigate how does this haunting process reverberate in the novel, and to illustrate the effect it has on portraying of the past.

Upon reading *La casa del padre*, a literary scholar cannot help but wonder: did Navarro read Freud's famous essay on "das Unheimliche" (1963), or the uncanny? It certainly seems that way, because the novel literally contains all uncanny motifs Freud summarizes. There are plenty of *Doppelgänger*, severed body parts,[1] and haunted houses present on its pages; a boy who suffers from a frost bite appears as "un ingenio mecánico" (66), who "crujía como un autómata" (65), bringing to mind the "Motiv der belebt scheinenden Puppe"[2] (61); and characters are missing eyes or wear the wrong glasses, so they "[entrecierran] siempre los ojos turbios" (62)—according to Freud (1963), it is "eine schreckliche Kinderangst [. . .], die Augen zu beschädigen"[3] (59).

The story of *La casa del padre* revolves around an unnamed protagonist, who is also the first-person narrator. From a latter-day perspective, the narrator recounts the six months he is supposed to have left of life on his return from the hospital after fighting for the *División Azul*, the Spanish army division that helped Nazi-Germany on the Russian front. His limited life expectations, due to machine gun pellets in his lungs, do not prevent his mother from sending him to study law in Granada, because disease in their home town of Málaga is threatening to kill him even before the six months are over. In Granada, he moves in with his father's brother. Since his late father married beneath his social class, the protagonist and his mother fall out of grace with the family, and he does not know his uncle, whose regular donations nonetheless enable his mother and himself to survive. He soon gets used to the big, dark house and its inhabitants, as well as their daily routines; he also gets to know his grandmother, who lies ill and whom he is not supposed to visit, and two mysterious inhabitants of the second floor, the Bueso siblings. The drive to Granada results in the protagonist making friends with: the journalist Portugal, who also comes from Málaga and asks to make the journey with them, and the eccentric property hustler, the Duke of Elvira, whom they meet in a hotel after the car breaks down. Though the protagonist does not like Portugal in the least, he soon realizes that the reporter is his ticket to spending many happy afternoons with Elvira and especially his wife Ángeles, with whom he has fallen in love instantly. Eventually, however, Elvira's vocation of blackmailing people into selling him real estate below market value results in his murder. Portugal, too, seems to disintegrate, and the only person who wins is the protagonist: he lives much longer than the allotted six months, finishes his studies, and marries Ángeles. At the end of his six months of life, moreover, he discovers that his uncle is actually his real father.

La casa del padre is full of uncanny conventions—most importantly, that of the double. It seems as if almost everybody in the novel has a double or pretends to be someone else. The protagonist, though he is portrayed as an outsider, is no exception. Many mothers of the young soldiers, who went to the Russian front with the protagonist, ask him if he has any news of their sons; out of pity, he lies that he knows them and that they are well. He is not the only one who lies in this way; for example, when an acquaintance tries to unmask

him as a liar by bringing him to a fellow soldier from Russia, whose extremities are severely corroded by a frost bite, the invalid pretends to know him. He does not really recognize him, but merely calls him by the nickname all soldiers from their town had: "Málaga, ya has vuelto tú también" (46). There is, it is suggested, no real difference between one and the other; they suffered similar fates and this makes them interchangeable.

Additionally, uncanny is Portugal's rumoured assumption of his brother's identity: "Muchos empezaron a decir que el Portugal que había muerto en un tejado de Granada era el falangista y que el Portugal que vivía era el comunista que se había puesto las gafas de su hermano" (62). This suspicion is fed by Portugal's inexplicable, uncanny behaviour: during the trip from Málaga to Granada, he brings a suitcase with him, which he got at an auction—the contents of which the protagonist recognizes from an advertisement in the paper (104). Once in Granada, Portugal seems to be doing badly, appearing more and more disheveled and drunk in his eternal summer suit. Finally, his troubled gaze through the spectacles that supposedly belonged to his brother gives him something uncanny, always "mirándonos como si no nos viera" (76).

However, one must note that the narrator is not to be trusted completely: his jealousy of Portugal and his enviable rapport with women in general, not to mention Elvira's wife Ángeles, makes him an especially unreliable narrator. "Portugal hechizó desde la primera visita al Duque de Elvira y a la mujer del Duque de Elvira. [. . .] Y yo me moría de celos," the narrator confesses. "[S]i no llevaba a Portugal, no me admitían en la casa del Duque de Elvira" (174–6). Whether Portugal is really masquerading as his brother, or whether the narrator merely suggests this out of jealousy, remains unclear for a long time. Even with the apparition of a photograph depicting the two brothers together, near the end of the novel, the ambiguity remains.

The most uncanny doubles are the Buesos, a truly monstrous brother-sister duo, abjectly impoverished and living amidst layer upon layer of filth. The Doppelgänger-motif is further developed through chauffeur's, Don Julio linking them to the Portugals, as well as to another pair of brothers, whose betrayal he relates. As the narrator recalls: "Don Julio sólo hablaba de parejas de hermanos, todos más o menos viles e infelices, dos hermanos, los Bueso [. . .]" (108). The uncannily one-eyed Bueso sister is particularly hideous:

> Había vuelto a taparse el ojo derecho con una gasa, iba vestida con ropa de hombre [. . .] y las vendas y la carne de la mujer tenían el mismo color de la ropa [. . .]. La mujer tenía ceniza y telarañas en el pelo, y la gasa que le cubría el ojo derecho era como una telaraña tupida, y no se sabía si el olor agrio y corrompido de la casa impregnaba a la mujer [. . .] o si el olor [. . .] de la mujer impregnaba todas las cosas. (146)

The narrator is terrified of her, and because of that she posesses him. She forces him to return to her house with oil she and her brother can feed on, threatening that she will tell the police that the protagonist is her friend, vanished or non-existent older brother if he does not obey. All in all, the Buesos are hardly human. It is not clear who they are or whether they really have a brother. The only thing the reader can discover of them with certainty, through a comment of Don Julio's, is that their father was executed (108). For the rest, these larger-than-life filthy characters are a horrific presence in the narration; their roles in it are vague and disquieting.

Other pairs of siblings and friends, who turn on each other, cause similar ambiguity in *La casa del padre*. Most notably, the uncle of the protagonist turns out to be, and assumes the role of, his father (261). Also, both Don Julio and the protagonist wear the dead man's old clothes, which creates a bizarre rivalry between them (135). The result of all this mirroring, reflection, and dis- or replacement, is that a sort of general ambiguity comes into being: no one is as he seems, and the reader is left in constant doubt about characters' identities, their lies, and their truths. Thus the uncanny Doppelgänger-motif gives the novel a general feel of instability: the apparently stable novelistic world is constantly unbalanced by the many masks its inhabitants appear to be wearing.

Thus we are left considering what effect do these uncanny conventions have in the novel, and whether they allow for haunting. Freud provisionally defines the uncanny as "[. . .] das Heimliche-Heimische [. . .] das eine Verdrängung erfahren hat und aus ihr wiedergekehrt ist"[4] (*Das Unheimliche* 75). It is the unfamiliar return of what was once familiar, and what disturbs us now. Freud gives some examples of the uncanny: the already mentioned *Doppelgänger*, severed body parts, and dolls which, through mechanisation or otherwise, appear

to be alive. Incidentally, many have called Freud's famous essay *itself* uncanny (Wolfreys 16): proof that not just the motifs mentioned by its author provide such an effect. In a footnote of his *Spectres de Marx*, Jacques Derrida comments on Freud's uncanny. He points out the apparent contradiction in Freud's analysis of the ghost in Hamlet. Freud is convinced that this ghost is *not* uncanny. After all, within the realm of fiction, such a breach of the conventions of the real world is to be expected. Derrida finds that the rest of Freud's essay contradicts this, since, he exclaims: "[. . .] tous les exemples de *Unheimlichkeit* sont dans cet essai empruntés à la littérature!" (275). Contrarily, John Fletcher argues in his analysis of *Spectres de Marx* that Derrida is mistaken here: Freud did not suggest that *all* fiction prevents supernatural events from appearing uncanny. It really depends on the text's genre and its conventions (33). It follows, then, that the uncanny is an effect that *can* occur in texts, and also in real life. It *can* be, but does not *have* to be, aroused by the appearance of supernatural things like ghosts; it *is*, however, dependent on conventions, expectations, laws; and it is the disruption of those. As such, it really is just another name for an incarnation of the spectral.

The spectre, and the spectral in general, are often referred to in fantastic literature and horror films as the 'undead.' Like a vampire, the spectre can manifest itself in the world of the living, and therefore, it is not dead; neither alive, nor a part of the world of the living, it is a mere apparition. By this reasoning, the spectral cannot *be*, just as it cannot *not* be. It has no ontological status, but rather occupies its own category, which Derrida calls a "hantologie." There is no way of defining it, because it simply *is* not. According to Derrida, the spectral is a concept without concept (Marx c'est quelqu'un 23). At most, it can be described by analogy, as Fredric Jameson does when he compares it to the "vibrations" of a heat wave (38).

Jameson's so-called "vibrations" are the manifestations of the spectral that we can observe in our world, and that produce a particular distorting effect. Julian Wolfreys considers this analogy particularly well-chosen, because not only does it pretend to define the undefinable, but it also illustrates how we can perceive the spectral, yet not see it. "A trace registers itself in the field of vision," Wolfreys explains, "but this trace is not that which causes the registration. Caused by that which affects the visible it is the trace of something else, something which cannot be seen, as such" (77). Wolfreys appears to take his own

description of haunting from this image of the spectral: "Haunting might best be described as the ability of forces that remain unseen to make themselves felt in everyday life" (110). The manifestation of this haunting is not the spectre, or ghost, but its trace: the ghost retracts itself as soon as it manifests itself. Simon Critchley calls this "the ghosting of the ghost" (10).

All this means that the motifs of which Freud speaks are not, in themselves, the uncanny. The motifs are what causes the invisible to "vibrate" and make itself perceptible. They are not ghosts, nor traces of ghosts; they are simply circumstances that allow for the spectral to manifest itself. Those circumstances do not have to be Freud's *Doppelgänger* or severed body parts. Derrida has suggested in 1997, for instance, that modern technology is the locus *par excellence* of haunting because modern modes of communication—television, the telephone—provide reproduction. And, as Derrida further points out, reproduction is linked to repetition and representation, creating a phantom structure. What is reproduced is always altered, fragmented and reduced, and at the same time, it is perpetuated or prolonged. In this manner, uncanny motifs in a text may point towards haunting, especially if they succeed in causing estrangement.

As discussed previously, *La casa del padre* certainly does not lack uncanny motifs. And there is yet another textual element that suggests the possibility of Navarro's novel being haunted. The haunted house motif, central in the novel as indicated by its title, both represents the typically uncanny and also, significantly, refers to another literary genre: the Gothic novel. At the start of the novel, while the protagonist is living with his mother in Málaga, the narrator describes the house they inhabit as asphyxiating: "[M]i madre [. . .] había empezado a transformarse: no podía respirar en aquella casa [. . .]. Fue pisar aquella casa y empezar el asma, el ahogo, el miedo a morir asfixiada" (82). What is more, he states that "[. . .] el piso que mi madre y mi padre compartían era el signo de la maldición" (83). In other words, it has come to represent the father's mistake of marrying a simple waitress and the shame of his being thrown out of his family's house in Granada where the uncle still lives. The narrator thus explicitly attributes metaphoric meaning to the houses that appear in *La casa del padre*.

The actual 'haunted house,' the house of the father, is a single floor in a larger building, and initially, it does come across as particularly scary. To the protagonist, however, it is like a prison, since almost all

doors are locked to him: "Todas las puertas tenían llave en aquella casa y todas las puertas estaban cerradas siempre" (144). Even worse, his uncle obliges him to rest constantly, making him feel like "Houdini, un mago que se lanza al fondo del océano atado con cadenas [. . .] y ha de liberarse antes de que lo mate la asfixia" (144). Eventually, however, he manages to make copies of all the keys of the house, and one night, he starts investigating it. In the dark, the house reminds him of "[. . .] la nieve, un laberinto sin muros en el que había estado encerrado una vez" (211). Massive and unknown in the darkness, the house is like a labyrinth. Indeed, its walls confine its own monster: the protagonist's demented grandmother: "Vi al monstruo, una vieja con la cabeza blanca, vestida de negro de pies a cabeza, deforme [. . .]" (212). At night, the house can turn into a "mundo de fantasmas" (215), while in the daytime, it is no less strange with its eccentric, black-haired maid, Beatriz, whose face exhibits strange red spots: "[. . .] las manchas rosa en la cara de Beatriz como mapas de Groenlandia y Gran Bretaña" (215), and with its rather tyrannical owner: "[. . .] todas las cosas estaban siempre como disponía mi tío" (135).

Strangest of all, perhaps, is how the house is mirrored in that of the Buesos, on the second floor: "[. . .] era una casa extraña porque era exactamente igual que la casa de mi tío, pero putrefacta [. . .]. En la pared [. . .] no había un cuadro como en la casa de mi tío, sino un gran rectángulo de un ocre más pálido que el ocre del resto de la pared" (147). Here, the motif of doubling and that of the haunted house work together to create a strange sense of ambiguity. This is further manifest in other houses, such as the Duke of Elvira's, which similarly personifies his illusive splendour, hollowness, and meaninglessness. As the narrator describes it: "Era como una película, como una casa que sólo es una fachada de telones pintados y bastidores de madera, en una habitación que quizá sólo tuviera las tres paredes que veías. Y quizá estuviera hueco el piano vertical con dos candelabros de plata y velas negras que no habían sido encendidas nunca" (154). More than fictional settings, the houses reflect the character and history of their inhabitants. Accordingly, a house can feel like a prison, a labyrinth, or a symbol of shame.

A house can also be tomb-like, a grave for the living dead. The Bueso siblings are said to have buried themselves alive in their own home, "[. . .] se habían enterrado en vida" (108). The same goes for the grandmother, who hides as if buried in her own home. Effectively,

for half a year, the protagonist resides in the realm of the living dead. Believing he has only six months left to live, he feels he has no life to look forward to, and discards his future, no longer making plans: he cannot live, and has yet to die. Repeatedly, he mentions that people look at him to see "[. . .] cómo operaba la muerte en mí" (187). Besides, he is paralyzed by a fear of dying, which is all the more significant since his father literally died of fear: "[. . .] se murió de miedo porque creía que llegaba la Marina nacional" (29).

Aside from the haunted house-motif and the *Doppelgänger* with which the novel is filled, then, there surfaces yet an additional convention of the Gothic novel: that of the living dead. In *La casa del padre*, these elements evidence an unstable reality in which the haunted house is perhaps the defining trope of the Gothic genre. This is usually defined as "[. . .] a genre given principal expression through the novel, [with] a life span of approximately 56 years" which was "given life in 1764 with the publication of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*" and "died allegedly somewhere around 1818 or 1820" (Wolfreys 8). Eve Sedgwick suggests that the Gothic novel, however defined, is the "[. . .] great liberator of feeling through its acknowledgement of the 'non-rational'" (11). Jacqueline Howard further informs that "studies [on the Gothic novel] have tended to proceed by cataloguing and codifying the literary conventions perceived to be common to the form" (13). Indeed, it is for its conventions that the Gothic novel is most known and easiest to distinguish. Howard names a number of these constituent elements:

> [. . .] a remote castle, monastery, or gloomy house with its confining crypts, vaults, and underground passage-ways [. . .] the persecuted heroine, tyrannical parent, villainous monk, Faustian overreacher [. . .], vampire-like apparition, [. . .] dreams, mysterious portents, animated portraits and statues, magic mirrors, and the like [. . .], embedded stories, letters, diaries, [. . .] broken-off manuscripts. (13)

The Gothic novel, then, is to be recognized as belonging to the Gothic genre by its moment of appearance, by its attention towards the emotional and irrational, and by its use of the previously named tropes.

Nonetheless, Julian Wolfreys argues that a broader view is necessary. Countering definitions of the gothic in terms of "genre," he

reconceptualises it as a "mode" (11). Genre, according to Chris Baldick, is "a recognizable and established category of written work employing such common conventions as will prevent readers and audiences from mistaking it for another kind" (90). In the case of the Gothic, we are dealing with a genre Baldick would qualify as a "specialized sub-category" (91) of literary art. Wolfreys suggests the existence of a "gothic mode" (13), that exists independently of the genre, a mode being in Baldick's definition "[. . .] an unspecific critical term usually designating a broad but identifiable kind of literary method, mood, or manner that is not tied exclusively to a particular form or genre" (139-40). Like the ironic or comic modes, the gothic mode thus becomes something that can be 'called up' in any literary work. The gothic as a "mode" liberates itself from the limitations imposed by "genre."

The consequence of this liberation of the gothic is that it loses its proverbial body, materiality, and attachment to a limited selection of literary works. If we accept Wolfreys's definition, and talk of the "spectralization of the gothic," we find that the gothic becomes "[. . .] one proper name for a process of spectral transformation [. . .]. Cast out of its familiar places, the gothic is dematerialized into a somewhat unpredictable tropological play" (Wolfreys 7). In other words, the gothic mode is, in fact, a process of haunting. As such, it can leave its traces in any number of places: in the real world, and, for that matter, in a fictional world as well. In doing this, it causes a sense of disruption. Wolfreys reaffirms: "The gothic is thus one name for acts of spectral troping which we otherwise name the ghostly, the uncanny, the phantom" (14).

As a form of haunting, however, the gothic mode does have its own particularities. Of course, it appears where the Gothic genre's conventions are apparent. These conventions are, in a way, typical for the spectral in general, and in this way overlap with the uncanny: the haunted house, the *unheimlich Heim*, is a trope that we also see within the uncanny, which is essential to the concept of haunting itself. After all, haunting is a disruptive element within a structure—and the mention of a structure (in the sense of a whole whose parts are related) indicates an importance of place within haunting; the haunted house is the most literal illustration of such a structure. The conventions traditionally associated with the Gothic genre cause the gothic mode to be activated, or to put it another way: to allow for a haunting process that I would be inclined to denominate "gothic."

Because of its similarities with the gothic mode, we can now begin to speak of an uncanny mode, both forms of haunting being complementary to each other. Each emerges in a text through certain tropes, and they *can* but may not necessarily imply haunting. In determining whether this is the case in a text such as *La casa del padre*, I look to Bakhtin's theory of the novel. Jacqueline Howard suggests an approach based on Bakhtin: she sees the novel as an arrangement of many voices or discourses. Though one discourse may be privileged, the text may contain many others; what is more, every text possesses a "potential for subversion" (5). Howard focuses on the disruptive force that exists within the text's structure—if the text is a house, she is looking for its ghosts. This haunting process *inside* the novel may be called the uncanny, the spectral or the gothic, depending on the circumstances giving rise to this particular case of 'estrangement.'

Just how the privileging of a discourse and the subordination of others is effectuated in a text becomes clear when we take into account Philippe Hamon's discussion of a text's "effet-idéologie" (9). Hamon shows that ideology as a textual element or effect comes into being in places in the text where such an evaluation takes place. He explains that every evaluative point in a text has its own specifics or *appareils normatifs*: the form of the evaluation (positive or negative), the nature of what is evaluated (action or person), the instance or instances who perform the evaluation and the norms that are called up may differ from evaluation to evaluation. Together, these four aspects produce what Hamon calls a *dominante normative* (28). From Hamon's description, we may conclude that ideology in a text is the result of constant comparison of norms, and that, since eventually a dominant norm results, the text's ideology is hierarchically structured. Furthermore, it is important to realize that though a text may appear to have a single dominant hierarchy, it is possible for this dominant to vary according to its point of evaluation. In Hamon's words: "Hiérarchies et dominantes peuvent varier à l'intérieur d'une même texte, ou d'une texte à l'autre" (39).

Hamon's and Howard's approaches to the hierarchical structuring of discourses in a text are quite similar. This becomes clear when we look at Howard's analysis of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, where he states:

> In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the discourses of sensibility and taste function to establish aesthetic and moral norms [. . .]. Sensibility, however, is also repeatedly criticized by the narrator for its dangerous potential to destabilize and weaken individuals, particularly women [. . .]. At the same time, working dialogically against such criticism, is the recontextualization of superstitions, folklore, and a discourse of the sublime which operates as a more or less unproblematic extension of the 'real,' and encourages belief in the uncanny [. . .]. (6)

What Howard has really found is a number of loci in the text whose dominant norms seem to be in conflict. Apparently, there are quite a few places where sensibility and taste stand out as positive norms. Then, there is the narrator, who evaluates one of these norms differently and warns against sensibility. And the discourse of the supernatural, uttered by that same narrator, undermines this warning yet again. Howard looks at evaluation points and, contrasting their normative dominant, identifies different discourses, or 'voices.'

Jacqueline Howard's analysis of *Udolpho* also illustrates how the different places of evaluation are hierarchically structured. She points out that the dominant norms (in this case, those underlying the discourses of taste and sensibility) are undermined by what she calls "women's assertiveness" (7). She concludes: "*Udolpho* can be said to disturb unquestioning acceptance of upper-middle-class patriarchal, social, and cultural order" (7). What Howard detects in the text is a subversive potential, a discourse that undermines the general, dominant discourse. In a limited number of textual places, the local *dominante* differs from the ones that occur most frequently in evaluative points. In Bakhtin's terms, the text has both centripetal and centrifugal forces (47). However, while analyzing the contrasting normative systems and their hierarchical order in the text, whereby one dominates the other, Howard leaves aside the actual presence of gothic conventions in Radcliffe's novel. The gothic mode that is opened up by the novel's villains, mysterious castles, and so on, is not fully undone by any logical explanations there may be given to the ghostly occurrences that scare the female protagonist. It is not just this protagonist, but also the reader who is affected by the haunting. What haunting does in a work like *Udolpho* is to undermine an ideological

structure—not as a *part* of such a hierarchy, as a dissonant voice or centrifugal force, but as a thing that is both incorporated into it and strange to it. This is not merely the case in a Gothic novel like *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. It also occurs in Navarro's *La casa del padre*.

In *La casa del padre*, the narrator's voice is the most important one. Therefore, the narrator is usually the evaluating instance. This narrator looks back from modern, democratic times upon the first years of the Francoist dictatorship, and so, his evaluation of such a society may contrast with the norms held valid at the time. In many places, however, the narrator avoids passing such a judgment, commenting on his incapacity to remember. He frequently states that "no tengo memoria", that "[. . .] siempre he querido perder la memoria" (67) or that "sólo tengo memoria para lo bueno" (295). All in all, he maintains that he has been lucky and happy in life.

A considerable part of the narration is focalized through the narrator's younger self. Interestingly, the narrator positions this protagonist firmly as an outsider, a spectator. Upon returning, traumatized, from Russia, the boy can only see the world around him conscious of the inevitable decay of all that is beautiful. When he gets to dance with Paula, the girl he is in love with, he is suddenly overcome by an awareness of her fate: "Vi bailar a la hija del farmacéutico con muchos, y era emocionante: estaba predestinada, dentro de diez años habría envejecido, estaría fea, y luego se pondría más vieja y más fea, y luego se moriría" (58). The contrast between his tender age and lack of experience with women, and his experience with putrefaction and death becomes painfully clear. To make matters worse, he feels constantly stared at: "me miraban y querían descubrir en mí la marca de la muerte" (187).

The young man's view on Spanish society of the 1940s is thus an outsider's view. What becomes most clear of all in his observations about the period and its value system, is: that in his eyes, there *are* no values. He is living in a moral vacuum. Perhaps the best illustration of the amorality that prevails in the society of *La casa del padre* is the corrupting influence it has on the protagonist himself. He is dominated by fear, a fear of standing out, of attracting attention: "Nadie se miraba dentro del tranvía [. . .]. Un hombre no desvió los ojos, y me imaginé que era uno de la policía secreta o un confidente" (153). He is afraid of being "[. . .] interrogado sobre un asunto del que no sabía nada" (196), which happened to a boy he knew. Perhaps as a

consequence of this fear, he lies constantly. He lies mostly to please people, "[. . .] sólo era para agradarle" (264). He lies to the Bueso sister that he knows her older brother. Eventually, he even starts inventing stories to tell his uncle, and makes up tales about his life in Russia to impress Ángeles. The narrator states that he did this because he discovered that "[. . .] era agradable mentir: mentí por comodidad, por hablar lo menos posible. [. . .] Era insoportable decir la verdad: daba sueño" (232). This is an obviously evaluative moment: the narrator 'defends' himself against possible recriminations, stating that lying was the most comfortable option in those days.

La casa del padre is populated with characters who let themselves be dominated by fear, who behave immorally, or who do both. Often, focalisation shifts from the young protagonist to them when their story is told, thus implicitly including their voices in the narration. There is, for example, Larraz, the director of the cinema in Málaga, who is terrified to be associated with either 'suspicious' people like the lawyer called Pleguezuelos, whose son was executed, or with a fascist known for his cruelty, "porque no quería destacarse" (22). It is clear that in those years, such fears were omnipresent, as the narrator remarks, "[. . .] quien está solo es sospechoso" (20). The Duke of Elvira exemplifies the amorality that is omnipresent in the novel. He handily makes use of the situation of the immediate postwar: as a distinguished falangist who has met Alfonso XIII, Franco, and José Antonio Primo de Rivera, he is in the position of blackmailing the less fortunate with their pasts. Journalist Portugal also behaves amorally: he writes propaganda for fascist newspapers. However, the protagonist manages to find out that before the war, Portugal, his brother, and the leftist son of Pleguezuelos were good friends. This means that Portugal was not originally on the nationalist side. The same goes for another member of their group of friends: Portada, now army officer and head of the police. It turns out he personally killed the young Pleguezuelos.

The young protagonist lives in what Navarro himself has called "[. . .] la atmósfera de grisura moral y mezquindad afectiva que impusieron los vencedores en los años cuarenta: un mundo de máscaras en estado de congelación" (qtd. in Márquez). In such circumstances, one either selfishly takes advantage of others whenever one can, like the Duke, or one lives in fear and lies to save one's own skin, like the protagonist does. All through the story, he has professed great admiration for the Duke of Elvira, even though he realized all along his behaviour

was unethical. This sympathy for Elvira is understandable: amid a nation consisting mostly of cowards, Elvira is a flamboyant risk-taker who does not mind standing out. A frightened, shy outsider, it is not surprising that the protagonist looks up to this worldly man.

As the novel progresses, it becomes clear why the narrator, in spite of the fact that he is constantly remembering, is very keen on forgetting the unpleasant sides of the past. After Elvira is murdered, it is the protagonist who ends up as the winner: he gains Elvira's wife and daughter. The protagonist has taken Elvira's place unscrupulously. What is more, upon Elvira's death, he comes into the possession of documents and photos painfully incriminating those who Elvira tried to blackmail. It is no wonder, then, that he claims to have "[. . .] muchos y excelentes amigos" (294), among them, the King himself. Worst of all, he suggests that he may have had something to do with the suicide of his childhood bully, the cousin of Elvira:

> Sólo guardé por diversión algunos papeles del Duque de Elvira que recogían debilidades juveniles del ingeniero Espona-Castillo Creus, primo del Duque de Elvira y nuevo Duque de Elvira, mi antiguo condiscípulo en el colegio jesuita de Málaga. Espona-Castillo Creus [. . .] se pegó un tiro cuando se rumoreaba que dormía la siesta con un novillero [. . .]. Entonces destruí también los papeles que conservaba sobre Espona-Castillo Creus, porque hay que olvidar, la memoria feliz y limpia está hecha de olvidos. (295)

Following the lack of norms he was faced with upon his return from Russia, the narrator has developed from a scared liar into a happy opportunist. Clearly, he knows that such behaviour may seem right to *him*, but it clashes with the value system of the society he currently lives in. That is why he likes to forget: to keep his memory 'clean' in the eyes of a new time.

It may be concluded that there are two different normative discourses at work that determine the ideology of the novel. First of all, there is the amoral discourse of the narrator—which echoes the discourse of forgetting that has dominated Spanish society for so long. In his description of the early Spanish 1940s, the narrator makes it perfectly clear that, in the absence of justice and morals, anything could get you killed and that violence was frequent and random. What

is remarkable is that the narrator does not openly attach a negative value to such amorality. This is, of course, a consequence of the fact that he has been so influenced by the lack of norms and values that he has appropriated them. In fact, on the last pages, he points out that his amoral value system has done him all the good in the world: he is influential, happy, and married to the woman of his dreams. Secondly, however, there is a normative discourse that is largely implicit: that of the narratee, that of the present. In the end, the narratee is openly addressed by the narrator: "Mañana le seguiré contando" (295). Here, the 'real' reader may feel spoken to, and in this way, the text indirectly incorporates his or her own normative discourse.

The dominant discourse here is not, as might be expected, that of the narrator. Though the text is apparently dominated by the narrator, and most of the characters adapt to or behave according to his value system, this discourse can only be described *in relation to* what came before it or in this case, after it. In other words, we can only speak of a moral vacuum when we define it through a discourse that is *not* a moral vacuum. Here we see an example of Bakhtin's concept of double-voicedness: one discourse implies the other. The narrator is an unreliable liar, whose admission to a-morality reads, at times, defensive. The narrator knows that he is judged by his narratee; he explains his motivations, but realizes where the narratee may disagree with him.

This hierarchy of dicourses is apparently stable throughout the novel. Nevertheless, a process of haunting disturbs this stability. This haunting is caused by trauma, the nature of which becomes clear when the narrator finally explains what happened in Russia, and why he won the Second Class Iron Cross. As they were stuck in a shack in Possad with a wounded corporal called Carré, his sergeant Leyva had ordered him to try and fix the wire that provided radio contact with headquarters. Exhausted, confused, and blinded by snow, he had not followed orders but instead shot at one of the two hand grenades Leyva had hanging around his neck, causing an explosion and the death of the two others: "Y entonces pensé: ¿si le disparo a una de las bombas, se estallará? Y apunté. Creo que disparé: me dormí, desaparecí. Y mucho después desperté en el Hospital de Riga con la Cruz de Hierro de Segunda Clase" (288). It can be deduced from the text that the boy acted in a fit of insanity and that he is thus not a true murderer. Nevertheless, the fact that his insane action was immediately rewarded with an Iron Cross is quite bizarre.

Though gothic or uncanny conventions as such need not imply the presence of a ghost, in this case it can be argued that they do cause disruption within the novel. This is evident in the way in which these conventions are connected to the traumatic episode in the Possad cabin. The house of the father reminds the protagonist-narrator of that snowy 'labyrinth without walls.' He also mentions that his uncle smothers him in it: "Me cuidaba mi tío, me tenía entre algodones, y era muy cansada la vida cómoda y feliz" (143). Just as in the cabin, the protagonist's world is muffled in snow, and it makes him mortally tired. As in Possad, he is waiting for death, and once again, he miraculously survives. The Possad episode is, like any true trauma, completely separated from the fictional world of Málaga and Granada in which the protagonist now lives. It is distant both in space and time, and having experienced the Russian front like the protagonist or the boy Rafael, it sets you apart. Nevertheless, the Possad scene keeps intruding into the consciousness of the protagonist-narrator. All houses are potential graves, like the Possad cabin: a snow or cotton padding keeps out the outside world. It may be concluded that in *La casa del padre*, a process of haunting takes place: trauma disrupts the fictional world, making use of phantom structures like reproductions and duplications or a haunted house.

For the ideological hierarchy of Navarro's text, the haunting gothic and uncanny work as an undermining force. While in the text's evaluative points, two normative discourses are opposed, the trauma disturbs those, blurring their boundaries. The Possad trauma works as a sort of explanation of the narrator's amoral stance: it justifies his holding on to the value system of a past era. In the Possad cabin, the protagonist felt trapped, excluded from the outside world, and he was driven to an act of insanity. Back in the world of the living, he receives a medal for his wartime performance. From this point on, behaving morally seems absurd to the narrator-protagonist: his only development between the 1940s and the democratic present is from a coward to an opportunist. The continuous intrusion of the Possad episode in the narration makes this almost understandable to the narratee, or implied reader: the feeling of being smothered and buried alive is constantly invoked by spaces and situations that remind the protagonist of the cabin in the snow: labyrinth-like houses, or the bed that his uncle forces him to spend much time in.

Interestingly, the haunting of the trauma, though it serves as an explanation for the narrator's amorality, does not allow for his

discourse to become dominant. The protagonist's trauma does not let him forget; the past continually intrudes in the present and cannot be silenced. The narrator may therefore claim to live a happy and forgetful life but in reality, there is no escaping the ghosts of the past. Clearly, then, the departure from realism in *La casa del padre* does not imply a return to or echo of the Spanish discourse of forgetting.

Instead, trauma vibrates within the novel, superimposing itself upon a more rational narration of the past. Navarro's novel *without* a gothic or uncanny mode would have been a confrontation of the narrator's provocatively amoral discourse and the implicit narratee's ideology—the latter of which, of course, many a contemporary reader would identify with. The novel would thus invite a reader to compare both discourses. This rational act, interesting as it may be in itself, cannot, however, make the trauma of such a past *felt*, like the traces of a ghost can be felt. The recasting of Navarro's protagonist's life in the early dictatorship through a trauma such as that of Possad, which causes him to experience it as something grotesque, uncanny, causes the structure of the novel, with its stress on morality, to become unstable. What the novel gains, though, is the presence of ghostly traces, which create an atmosphere so oppressive that it may make the postwar society somehow almost tangible to the reader.

Notes

1. "Abgetrennte Glieder [. . .] haben etwas ungemein Unheimliches an sich", Freud contends. (*Das Unheimliche* 73). ["Dismembered limbs [. . .] have something peculiarly uncanny about them" (*The Uncanny* 636).]

2. "[. . .] theme [. . .] of a doll which appears to be alive" (*The Uncanny* 629).

3. "[. . .] the fear of damaging [. . .] one's eyes is a terrible one in children" (*The Uncanny* 628).

4. "[. . .] secretly familiar [*heimlich-heimisch*], which has undergone repression and then returned from it" (*The Uncanny* 637).

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Santitos: Loss, the Catholic Sleuth, and the Transnational Mestiza Consciousness

Juan Velasco
Santa Clara University

Death is an unquestionable part of our lives, a matter of time, the only thing we know for certain. The death of your own child, however, is a matter of disbelief, perhaps madness. How do cultures account for the deaths of their children? How does literature address their loss, mourning and rage? In María Amparo Escandón's novel *Santitos* [*Esperanza's Box of Saints*][1] (1999), a young widow, Esperanza, stares death in the face walking the fine line between loss and madness, healing and trauma for over two hundred pages. As the author has explained, this is the main question of the novel: "What if I was told my daughter had died and I wasn't able to confirm her death? My immediate reaction would be to deny it. To prove them wrong I would do what anyone else would in this case: anything and everything. Call on otherworldly forces for guidance? Sure. Set out to find her who knows where in the world? Of course. Become a prostitute? You bet. And in the process of looking for her, I'd most likely find myself." (http://www.sdlatinofilm.com).

In the novel Esperanza Diaz has just lost her twelve-year-old daughter to an unexplained virus. The last time she saw her, Blanca was in the hospital to have her tonsils removed. Suddenly she is reported dead. What follows gives the novel an unlikely twist. The night of the funeral Esperanza experiences a vision from San Judas Tadeo, patron saint of desperate cases. Speaking through his image on the oven window, he tells her that her daughter is not dead. Then, Esperanza sets off with her box of saints to look for her daughter. This journey takes her from her native town of Veracruz to Tijuana, then to the Mexican side of Los Angeles and finally back home again.

Santitos not only articulates the complexities of loss, melancholia, and mourning but also links these elements to create new forms of representation for the most recent Latin American novel. As loss becomes the

starting point of the narrative, the rest of the novel explores of "[. . .] the numerous material practices by which loss is melancholically materialized in the social and the cultural realms and in the political and aesthetic domains" (Eng & Kazanfian 5). This is relevant given recent discussions on the crisis of representation within circles of Latin American Cultural Studies. In *The Exhaustion of Difference: The Politics of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Alberto Moreiras states that the "[. . .] conditions of possibility for Latin Americanist discourse have shifted over the last decade" (1). He also suggests that "[. . .] what is at issue in the debate on literature and cultural studies is nothing but the specific valences of the critical function in the humanities" (2). What is being debated, of course, is as much the peculiarities of its specific valences as it is the exhaustion of the process of differentiated repetition, and the value of a literary and cultural representation that seems to be trapped in the binary cage of postcolonial thinking. Has Latin American discourse lost the power of representation in an increasing culture of globalization? In the light of these debates, how does loss (a central category of the novel) bring new forms of representation? To what degree does this concept allow space for a configuration of a new transnational mestiza consciousness? This article examines the remaking of a transnational mestiza literary tradition in the light of new Latin American creative writing and critical thought. I argue that this recent Latin American literary production seeks to create a link between personal loss, and the trauma of historical legacies, such as borders, migration or globalization. More specifically, in the case of *Santitos*, the different aspects at play activate a new kind of novel: the role of loss and mourning, combined with techniques from the traditional analytic detective novel, lead to the birth of a transnational mestiza cultural consciousness.

1. Loss and Mourning.

Mothers raise questions. When they go unanswered, rage takes over reasoning. While some family narratives seek resolution, or at least an explanation for the loss experienced by all the members, others get stuck on endless dwelling, trapped in the grief that changed the realities of their life. A loss without closure results in endless mourning, a state of permanent grief, and an attachment to the past that erases the present or any possibility of a future. The inability to resolve those moments of loss from the past coupled with the lack of grief's resolution, creates what Freud describes as 'melancholia.'

Escandón, who grew up in Mexico City, and spent long periods of her life in Veracruz, is by no means the first to use loss and melancholia as a vehicle for literary expression. Loss is as fundamental to Latin American literature as it is to the Western canon. But to really understand Escandón's use of loss in the context of Latin American cultural studies and its relationships to literary representation, we must place the matter in its historical context. Loss and melancholia have played an important role in contemporary Latin American literature. We need only recall Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and Octavio Paz's *El laberinto de la soledad* [*The Labyrinth of Solitude*] (1950) to understand the considerable influence these issues have had on the Latin American psyche.

Loss and the consequences of mourning explain to a great degree what Rulfo achieved at the peak of the Latin American modernist period. *Pedro Páramo* is not less than the most haunting state of erasure prescribed by the idea of loss in a specific symbolic setting. Comala (the mythical city of *Pedro Páramo*) portrays a perplexing state of perpetual loss that permeates all 'existence.' This place, usually associated with the Latin American cultural and political state of affairs since WWII, in many ways anticipates what Moreiras describes as the exhaustion of 'difference.' Rulfo's prophetic predictions on the limitations of the Latin American signifier (the sign of 'Mexican identity' in this case), involve not only the demise of the Revolution itself but its co-option by the political and economic forces at work since the 1950's. The result is a fixation on the father, with its mode of representation a monumental historical vacuum boxed by endless grief. Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude* reinforces this fixation on loss and the infinite solitude that emanates from this state of the culture. And for Paz, it is the archetype of La Malinche (the Mexican Eve), that articulates the absence of the father, the Mexican's sense of (pathological) melancholia, and the loss of culture. Neil Larsen's *Modernism and Hegemony: A Materialist Critique of Aesthetic Agencies* argues for the cultural agency of the modernist aesthetics taken by these two writers during this period. He argues that Rulfo's mode of representation is an ideological and (negative) essentialist statement on the identity of Mexican culture:

> The aura of 'culture' that emerges from this vacuum has in its turn, however its own repressive logic. Culture in itself

> becomes the naturalizing and dehistoricizing containment of what is otherwise potentially an emergence of a particular counterrrationality directly opposed to that of the absent of state mediation. (Larsen 64)

But what Rulfo and Paz's states of melancholia, as the archetypal representation of the Latin American 'being,' imply is not so much a condemnation of the Revolution itself as the exhaustion of its signs of representation. Both writers underline the impossibility (Comala and the labyrinth being archetypes of a culture trapped in endless mourning), of coming into a closure with the loss of the (state) 'father' after the failure of the revolutionary impulse of the 1920's. This is especially pertinent for contemporary Mexican Literature since two of the most influential writers since the 1950's use the aesthetics of melancholia to make the readers aware of the political and cultural losses implied by the spread of modernity.

What does it mean, then, to enter the discourse of loss, mourning and cultural identity during the 1990's? Will Latin American writing be condemned, after being unable to heal the loss, to dwell in Paz's solitude or Comala's pathological melancholia?

Escandón brings back the question in new and creative ways. Esperanza uses both faith and rage, moving between insight and madness, as ways of disrupting the pathological melancholia affecting the mode of representation of Latin American culture since the 1950's. Surprisingly, these disruptions are performed through a sort of 'public theology' with heavy roots in the popular—apparitions, saints, miracles and other signs of Mexican Catholic spirituality. But Escandón uses these miracles to move into the ethical realm and beyond the traditional aesthetics of Magical Realism. In fact, she redefines the notion of the national absent 'father' with the more transnational symbol of the 'mother'—the Virgin of Guadalupe. Max Stackhouse, in the lecture entitled "Globalization, Public theology, and New Means of Grace," defines public theology as that which "[. . .] generates a faith-full worldview, recovers and recasts certain pertinent historic themes in the history of theology that bear on globalization, and challenges any trends in theology that sees all normative claims as privileged to specific gender, ethnic, social, or convictional groups" (5). *Santitos* generates this 'public theology,' through the constant investigation of her loss, and the exploration of those places in-between that refuse easy solutions.

In fact, her box of saints articulates the connection between those two aspects through the exploration of its "empty spaces." During her long trip north, the box where she keeps her saints becomes the connection with the memory of her daughter: "En el otro brazo llevaba una caja de cartón voluminosa y difícil de cargar. En un costado había escrito con marcador: 'Frágil. Santos.' La apretaba contra su pecho igual que si se tratara de un bebé. Su contenido resonaba dentro como si fuera un ser vivo que trataba de escapar" (78) ["In the other arm she carried a voluminous carton box that was difficult to carry. In one of the corners she had written with a marker: 'Fragile. Saints.' She held on to it against her chest like it was a baby. The insides of the box sounded as if there was a living person trying to escape"]. The box of saints recreates in humorous and creative ways the emptiness left by loss and migration, and this commonality becomes one of the main ways of collapsing her personal grief with the social. The box of saints allows her also to generate a public theology through careful attention played to the gaps created by loss. Joan Copjec, paraphrasing Lefort, states that:

> Someone dies and leaves behind his place, which outlives him and is unfillable by anyone else. This idea constructs a specific notion of the social, wherein it is conceived to consist not only of particular individuals and their relations to each other, but also as a relation to these unoccupiable places. The social is composed, then, not just of those things that will pass, but also of relations to empty places that will not. (Copjec 23)

If *Pedro Páramo* and *The Labyrinth of Solitude* believe these places to be past, and therefore absent objects of mourning, *Santitos* looks at the 'relations' to the empty places as the present fabric of the social. This form of hopeful melancholia is set in the present allowing for a creative reformulation of grief. Her box of saints 'embodies' these relations to empty places in the present, and becomes a creative force as it extends the way mourning becomes interwoven with other people's losses and border crossings. As this becomes one of the main issues addressed through Esperanza's loss, Escandón constructs a clever narrative structure that pushes beyond the traditional assumptions of Magical Realism and contemporary Latina fiction. It is not surprising that through her loss Esperanza becomes a witness for

those undocumented and exploited by the border. Her box of saints, embodying the relations to empty places, is simultaneously a reminder of her personal loss, and the tool that brings her closer to the prostitutes, abandoned children, wrestlers, and a large representation of the marginalized on both sides of the border. The melancholia as pathology is transformed into a positive form of melancholia that offers hope, community and growth. With each character, and with each tale told from this subaltern community, Esperanza gains new insights into the dynamics of the relationship between Chicano and Mexican life in the Southwest. Loss is taken beyond the pathology of melancholia as the signifier of representation, and her identity expands into a border identity, a discovery of a 'larger' community which implies the Mexican on the other side of the border, but also the blurred relationship between the dead and the living—the undead.

2. A Latina Catholic Sleuth.

How *Santitos* takes loss and transforms it into the aesthetics of the transnational mestiza consciousness is indeed one of the many accomplishments of this narrative. The underlying structure of the work is ontological—a search for the truth in the midst of loss. This loss, the death of her only child, forces her into a spiritual and emotional search; she is forced into reorientation in the face of death, and forced to experience multiple cultural and emotional landscapes. But what happens if after the initial catalyst, the meaning of loss itself becomes the main object of her search? And what are the strategies involved in order to make the reader part of this journey?

Richard Raskin states in "The Pleasures and Politics of Detective Fiction" that there are at least three main theories explaining the psychological appeal of detective fiction: the ludic (which emphasizes the inclusion of the reader), the wish fulfillment (gratification is the central element of the narrative), and the tension reducing (the narrative structure of the novel being able to dispel any kind of emotional feelings). As Escandón is shaping and remaking the traditional analytic detective work, it is important to notice that *Santitos* belongs to the first one: she lets the reader "[. . .] enjoy the writer's virtuosity in playing with and against the convention of the genre" (76). The advantages of this strategy are clear: Esperanza's journey in the direction of new communities is extended beyond the limitations of the text—there is an implicit invitation to us, the readers, to do the same kind of sharing.

Like many contemporary works of the twentieth century, Escandón borrows key literary techniques from the traditional detective form: self-consciousness as a central theme, the quest for absolute truth, text as a labyrinth, bipolar oppositions, and geographic symbolism. Like the traditional detective, Esperanza is given a mystery (her loss) to solve and completes the task by carefully considering all the evidence at her disposal. But as she continues using the traditional analytic detective techniques, she also experiments with form, creating new methods of interplay between the detective (a mother), the victim (her daughter), and the murderer (God). Esperanza is also a different kind of detective. Escandón creates a blend of idiosyncratic and sympathetic qualities that fuse religion and humor, feminism and adventure. If Esperanza is a new Sherlock Holmes, Saint Jude (and her box of saints) is her Dr. Watson. Furthermore, this detective is not only a mix of prostitute and compassionate mother; she also brings a humorous dissolution to the roles by which women have been classified within patriarchal societies. Breaking away from the whore/mother paradigm, Esperanza is a different hero on a quixotic quest. As she travels from Tlacotalpan (Veracruz) to Tijuana, from Tijuana to Los Angeles and then back again, Esperanza confronts the meaning of her loss with the precision and sophistication of a modern Catholic sleuth.

As we learn from the mystery posed as kidnapping, the search for the truth about the loss of her daughter becomes for the reader the hook that makes him/her keep reading. The reader is included in the process of transformation and awareness that leads to the discovery of a true sense of community. Furthermore, the novel functions like a puzzle to be solved. The reader receives multiple perspectives on the events, and Escandón keeps the reader guessing as she supplies bits and pieces of the information not entirely understood until the book and the story are completed.

An intimate relationship between Esperanza and the reader is established from the very beginning as we listen to this warm act of a confession: "Debí decírselo la vez pasada que vine a confesión, pero no me atreví. Las palabras me dieron la espalda, como amigas desleales" (11) ["I should have told him the last time I came to confession, but I did not attempt to do it. The words turned their back on me like disloyal friends"]. With this statement, the reader becomes one with Esperanza's spiritual tribulations, becoming part of the work, he or she interacts with the characters and draws conclusions.

Through this privileged position, the reader gains access also to the greater community of the border-crossers and the space they inhabit. The reader not only becomes part of the text, but also gets a sense of the greater community Esperanza is discovering. This involves an American judge, Scott Haynes, with a fixation for mothers; Trini, the transgender who is the most famous brothel-keeper in Tijuana; Paloma, the homeless girl; Angel, the wrestler she falls in love with, etc. Through this progressive production of meaning, the reader becomes acculturated into the community of the border, growing familiar with the customs and unspoken norms of the marginal people we encounter through Esperanza's journey.

We should not underestimate the forces of the journey since this is the second reverse to the traditional analytic detective work. It is in the postponing of the inevitable truth that Esperanza gathers the strength to push the boundaries of the unknown and the insights that bring cultural and spiritual renewal. The journey sometimes signifies suffering, but along with this there is also endurance, perseverance, and a deep sense of faith that values laughter, womanhood and hope. The novel points at the truth as the inevitable—the quest. And it is in this quest, and not in the answers, where she becomes one with her loss. Esperanza's hope is firmly rooted in her conception of loss and mourning, popular Catholic spirituality, her border crossing experience and the search for a new consciousness. Loss is transformed into an awareness of the greater community, the rainbow of characters and border-crossers that facilitate her cultural and spiritual liberation. This strategy becomes the link with the practices by which loss is "[. . .] materialized in the social and the cultural realms and in the political and the aesthetic domains" (Eng & Kazanfian 5). In the uncertain border, the present quality of her loss, Esperanza is able to forge a consciousness and a sense of grief that allows space for self-empowerment. As Esperanza escapes the isolation of her life, the quest for the truth opens up her view of the world. Framing the investigation within the context of the journey allows for the novel to explore simultaneously individual and social self-empowerment.

Borrowing from the detective analytic story, *Santitos* builds "[. . .] a continuous engagement with loss and its remains [that] generates sites for memory and history, for the rewriting of the past as well as the reimagining of the future." (Eng & Kazanfian 4). The mystery then becomes the mourning subject, and this aspect of investigation

allows her to embark into a journey of self-restoration, of integration of the missing pieces of her life. Through her initial refusal of closure, Esperanza learns how to investigate uncertainty, be fearless in the journey, and respectful to the mystery of her 'mourning remains.' In the face of trauma and loss, the negative energies of loss are temporarily suspended, then transformed into endless creativity. This relationship between the particular and the totality gives to Escandón's work a form of expression to recapture a new consciousness and its relationship with history.

3. The New Mestiza's Consciousness.

Santitos is also at its heart a tale of self-searching and the birth of a new consciousness. A child dies and it turns out that faith and the analytical detective skills of Esperanza, with the help of several border crossings, provide the transformation. But what changes in the narrative is not so much loss (death) as Esperanza's role as a wife and mother. To a vision of the world comprised by passivity and submission, *Santitos* postulates a vision of Esperanza as a questioning individual and border crosser.

Esperanza's border-crossings and her practices as a female sleuth, subvert the symbolic nature assigned to women within Mexican and Catholic traditional culture. Escandón uses humor to reverse the discourse imposed on the feminine (the dialectics of mother/whore as the only roles of access to power for women), and Esperanza goes in and out of these roles, never letting any of them touch her deepest search for a new self. As humor dissolves the false boundaries of the paradigm, it also shows the repressive nature of the Mexican nationalist discourse imposed on the feminine. The conflicting articulation of gender and identity can be traced back to the creation of a Mexican 'revolutionary' culture during the 1920s and 1930s. The contemporary patriarchal vision of Mexican identity will be reinforced later by the analysis of the Mexican self in Octavio Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude* during the 1950's. Paz's construction of the archetype of La Malinche as linked to the 'loss' of the original Mexican (Malintzin being the mother of all mestizos), creates a vision of the feminine radically antithetical to the discourse of 'Mexican' identity and nationalism. As his discourse positions the original 'mother' of all Mexicans at the roots of betrayal and loss, the paradigm of nation-state, identity and creativity shifts towards patriarchy and a pathological sense of melancholia.

Escandón's new sense of identity emerges from a discourse of Mexican identity that gives meaning to the lives of people in the margins, and her insights are born out of the complexities of the dual consciousness of the Border and an all embracing 'mother'—the Virgin of Guadalupe. As Esperanza expands her consciousness into the greater cultural community of Mexico and the U.S. Southwest, a space emerges that helps bring a sense of interconnectedness and history among Mexicans and Chicanos living in the United States. The real innovation of *Santitos* is the attempt to situate personal loss within the frame of border crossing and its economic, psychological and spiritual consequences. Escandón speaks of loss in a multifaceted way that "allow us to understand the lost object as continually shifting both spatially and temporally, adopting new perspectives and meanings, new social and political consequences, along the way"(Eng & Kazanfian 5). In fact as Esperanza's search takes her to Tijuana, she also discovers the experience of crossing illegally. Referring to the saint of the undocumented border crossers (Juan Soldado, not recognized officially by the church), the narrator points at how he was "[. . .] un pobre desgraciado, como nosotros. Aquí necesitamos más santos que en otras partes. Esperanza también necesitaba más santos, ahora que estaba decidida a cruzar la frontera" (132) ["[. . .] a poor disgrace, just like us. We need more saints here than in other parts. Esperanza also needed more saints, now that she had decided to cross the border].

Within this context involving the sociopolitical situation and cultural production in both sides of the border, Escandón also uses a specific spiritual image that expresses best the space of the 'transnational-mestiza' experience: The Virgin of Guadalupe. In this novel, both Mexican and Chicano popular Catholic spirituality are joined by the devotion to the Mother. This symbol becomes a tool for both deconstructing geographical separations and facilitating the inclusion of a space of consciousness in-between cultures. Furthermore, there are intrinsic emancipatory cultural values associated with the deconstruction of the other 'mother' of all Mexicans. Escandón is able to replace the negative connotations of La Malinche, created by the official discourse of nation-state, with one that takes part in a tradition that theorizes mestizaje and a popular religious faith as the basis for a cultural and spiritual greater community of hope. Escandón not only reverses the logic of patriarchal structure and its pathology of loss, but also offers a spiritual and geographical reconstruction of a 'Mexican'

identity beyond borders. It is not by chance that Esperanza finds her consciousness in the midst of her reflections on the 'mother' as she remembers two moments of her life associated with Mexico and the Mexico of the other side of the border. Remembering the same Virgin of Guadalupe painted in one of the murals of East Los Angeles, and the one in Mexico City, Esperanza again asks to her Dr. Watson (San Judas Tadeo) for guidance. It is then, in this new understanding of her loss (a climatic moment that seals her moment of consciousness) that Esperanza is able to return home: "Por fin sé lo que me quiso decir San Judas Tadeo. Blanca no está muerta. Blanca no está viva. Está en ese espacio pequeñito entre lo uno y lo otro. Ahí es donde debí buscarla" (218) ["At last I know what San Judas Tadeo wanted to tell me. Blanca is not dead. Blanca is not alive. She is in that small space between the one and the other. It was there were I should have looked for her"].

It is at his point that 'home' is recreated as the discovery of a larger community that extends not only beyond borders but also beyond the borders of life and death. The fact the Blanca, her daughter, can still be contacted in the spaces in-between life and death allows for Esperanza a new sense of reality, connected to spiritual and sociopolitical insights. The re-elaboration of this tradition of heterogeneity and hybridization (using the Virgin of Guadalupe as a symbol) is transformed into a space in between that unites popular Catholic spirituality, feminist awareness and an aesthetics of border-crossing.

To loss and mourning, *Santitos* responds with a quest that gives new meanings to self-consciousness. Transforming loss into laughter, adventure into spiritual insight, the border crossings become journeys of self-empowerment and redemption, of faith searching for human dignity and truth that naturally gives rise to the connecting features of the greater cultural communities not divided by borders. In a new more complex type of heroism, the heroine acts from a sense of motherhood whose faith allows her to witness the downfall of melancholia as pathology. Self-empowerment takes over loss, and a new consciousness emerges at the end. In many ways *Santitos* radical crossings corresponds to Bhabha's 'savage hybridity,' defined by Moreiras as "[. . .] the radicalization of the reticent version of cultural hybridity on the basis of its constitutive negativity: it turns a reticent understanding of cultural change into a principle of counterhegemonic praxis, and it places it at the service of the subaltern position in the constitution

of the hegemonic system" (296). This is relevant to our initial discussion of the conditions for a new Latin American discourse and the exhaustion of the process of differentiated repetition. As many critics question the role of Latin American discourse in an increasing culture of globalization, Escandón gives loss a new value as crossings become not only the distinctive sign of the narrative but also the bridge connecting different geographical cultural traditions, blurring the spiritual territories of grief and creativity and the construction of a new consciousness. In the light of her border-crossings, Esperanza awakens to new sexual and spiritual experiences, to a new understanding of her role as a mother, and a consciousness as a transcultural mestiza that creates bridges connecting the Mexican and the Chicano experience.

Escandón explores (literally) the spaces in-between that escape the homogenizing control of both national states (the Mexican and the American), and transforms Esperanza's border crossings into vehicles that define both a cultural and spiritual policy. I find this particularly interesting, as the novel seems to suggest that it is the nation-state that legislates a pathological past-bound form of melancholia, as opposed to the hope, present-bound melancholia of Esperanza. In the spiritual world of Esperanza the solution to the mystery of loss comes back over and over again through the pursuing of the journey, the discovery of self-realization and the building of a greater community of hope. This positive re-elaboration of melancholia (which could be called a 'hopeful melancholia') within the Latin American tradition of hybridity becomes the element that unites the spiritual and the cultural, the geographical journey and individual self-empowerment. In *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*, Leigh Gilmore argues that "[. . .] placing a personal history of trauma within a collective history compels one to consider that cultural memory, like personal memory, possesses 'recovered' or 'repressed' memories, and also body (or body politic) memories of minoritized trauma like racial and sexual violence" (31-32). In this novel, personal trauma placed in the collective history of the Southwest is transformed into metaphors of healing through hybridism, border-crossings, and the search for a space from which one can propitiate the reconstruction of a community able to transcend the separation of borders—a 'transnational mestiza consciousness.' Furthermore, the emancipatory values of this transnational mestiza consciousness theorize a new space that creates a link between personal loss, grief, melancholia, and the trauma of

historical legacies, such as imposed borders (the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo), migration or globalization.

The most important aspect of *Santitos* as a detective novel, however, is the solution. This 'solution' to the mistery of loss and grief seems to emanate also from her own daughter's border identity in that space in-between living and death. Despite the actions of Esperanza and her practices as a female sleuth, the novel postulates a vision of a world comprised not of specific outstanding individuals but of spiritual interconnectedness and community. Escandón's novel with its analytic detective structure, produces an on-going investigation on loss, trauma and the struggle of the marginalized that ultimately recapture spiritual interconnectedness and the community experience on both sides of the border.

This culture of transnational crossings becomes the quest for absolute consciousness, a totalizing perspective that has to be redefined by the reader given the evidence: the text. The aesthetics of *Santitos* becomes a call for the reader to construct alternative stories, which, in turn, become also alternative to the official History. Through these strategies the reader is exposed to the spiritual, cultural and historical truths of Esperanza as a border-crosser's historical legacy of trauma. As a result, it proposes in its place, a new space, a new history, represented by the new consciousness. Through this intellectual challenge the reader is allowed to get closer to the truth of the experience of this people, become a participant in this search for self-empowerment, and recapture the meaning of loss in this geographical area. Escandón creates a metastructure that at certain times engages in the particular and at others, in the universal mysteries of life and death, sacrifice and redemption. Because of her faith, an unbreakable spirit drives her search; because of her refusal to fixed solutions, her energy is endless. Esperanza also finds meaning in search of her past, her relationships, and the truth about how she was displaced from her traditional role in the family by the loss of both her husband and her only child. And what the reader discovers through the knowledge of history and facts (this evidence is announced by Angel) is that "[. . .] la esperanza es lo ultimo que muere" ["Hope is the last thing that dies"].

Note

1. All translations from Spanish to English are my own unless otherwise noted.

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Reviews

BENÍTEZ, RUBÉN. *Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular*. Zaragoza: Anejos de *El gnomo*. Colección *Desde mi celda*, 2005.

Over the course of his academic career, Rubén Benítez has deservedly achieved renown, in this country as well as abroad, as a distinguished and prolific critic of nineteenth century Spanish letters. Figuring among his considerable contributions to this field are his important studies of such literary icons as Benito Pérez Galdós (*La literatura española en las obras de Galdós*, 1992; *Cervantes en Galdós*, 1990); Mariano José de Larra (*Mariano José de Larra*, 1979); and especially Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (*Ensayo de bibliografía razonada de Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer*, 1961; *Bécquer tradicionalista*, 1971). The most recent addition to his extensive list of Bécquer publications is *Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular*, a compact but dense exploration of the sources, origins, and influences that helped shape the Sevillian poet's art. As he states in the book's preface, Benítez's purpose—and challenge—in undertaking this latest work, is to disprove those who, while admiring the lyric simplicity and emotionally affecting nature of Bécquer's writings, erroneously ascribe those qualities to a kind of ingenuous artlessness, a natural gift of pure inspiration. On the contrary, Benítez argues persuasively, the "authentic" Bécquer, not an "academic" poet or even highly educated in a formal sense, was nevertheless undeniably familiar with and receptive to the diverse elements that collectively defined the European cultural climate of the time. These myriad currents—the high and low, centuries-old and modern, poetic, musical, rhetorical, and philosophical—converged with his abiding devotion to the tradition of the popular lyric, and from this convergence Bécquer forged his own distinctive esthetic.

Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular is divided into four parts, the first of which examines the theory underlying Bécquer's "estética del sentimiento." The intimate expression of deeply-rooted feelings, complemented by the formal simplicity typically found in popular poetry and song, were not only the essential components of his concept of poetry; they were also the primary reason his work stood apart from that of his contemporaries. Benítez points out that Bécquer's *Rimas* represent the culmination of a lyric tradition whose origins can be found in Arabic love poetry; at the same time, the outpouring of passion compressed into simple, unadorned forms are the common currency of the popular lyric.

Benítez traces numerous fundamental influences on Bécquer's work, both direct and indirect. For example, the poet's familiarity with Condillac's antirationalist theories about the role of the senses and memory in the imaginative process came by way of Alberto Lista's teachings as expounded in *Ensayos literarios y críticos*. Lista believed that *sentimiento* originates in the soul and thus provides the very structure on which poetry is built. This is not far from the poet's own definition: in his *Cartas literarias a una mujer*, he equates poetry with love, and love with religion. Similarly, for Lista, the two cornerstones of poetry are spirituality and love: the former is variously exemplified by the Psalms, San Juan de la Cruz, Milton, and Chateaubriand; the models for the latter are encountered in the poetry of Petrarch and Fernando de Herrera.

Not unexpectedly, one of the key sections of *Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular* is the discussion of the three class of poetry: namely, natural, primitive, and popular. Some elements of Hebrew and Arabic verse are identified as natural poetry, whereas primitive poetry, presumably that of undeveloped civilizations, is best represented by the books of the Old Testament, Eastern literature, and the Caledonian bards, most particularly Ossian. The literature that spontaneously arises among the common people is defined as popular poetry: in the view of Manuel Milá y Fontanals, while *el pueblo* does not compose poetry, the continual changes, modifications and additions effected over time amount to "[. . .] una elaboración colectiva del texto" (59). Bécquer considered Augusto Ferrán to be Spain's first popular poet and in fact, the ideals delineated by Ferrán in *La Soledad*, (i.e., communication of personal feelings, simple forms, musical rhythms) are among those to which Bécquer himself aspired in his *Rimas*. Interestingly, the *Rimas* are not popular poetry per se since it is, as even Bécquer recognized, literally inimitable. Still, according to Rubén Benítez, the inextricable melding of popular elements and intense personal emotions in the *Rimas* marked a new milestone in the history of the Spanish lyric.

As explained in "Modelos," the second part of *Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular*, Bécquer saw himself as a repository of the Spanish lyric tradition. He cited any number of Spanish authors in his articles, but claimed three in particular as his *dioses penates*. Garcilaso de la Vega, in his perception, was the paradigm of artistic perfection, of Spanish national values and, in short, of the Spanish

soul. Bécquer held "the divine" Fernando de Herrera in high esteem as well, primarily thanks to his love poetry, and even contemplated writing a novel based on Herrera's unrequited love for the Countess of Gelves. The third member of the trinity was Francisco de Rioja, whose *Silvas* provided Bécquer with an exemplar of visual imagery, especially the delicately nuanced colors and shades of Rioja's flower imagery. Garcilaso, Herrera and Rioja, whose depiction of feminine beauty conformed to the same inaccessible ideal invoked by so many painters of the Italian Rennaissance, was embraced by the Romantics, and later absorbed within Bécquer's personal vision and style, surfacing in such *Leyendas* as "El rayo de luna."

Furthermore, the ephemeral vision of woman we encounter in that legend is, in Benítez's judgment, at least partially due not to the influence of one Bécquer's compatriots, but to Ossian, the fictitious bard created by the Scot James Macpherson, and another significant presence in the Spaniard's early verses. Appearing in the ode, "A Quintana," for example, are such typically Ossianic motifs as mist and harps, the latter first identified as such by Dámaso Alonso. At the same time, Bécquer's image of death, we learn, comes not from his lived experience in Andalucía, but instead from his youthful reading of Ossian.

Perhaps of even greater import is Bécquer's familiarity with the art and literature of Islam, and with the ideas, sights and sounds of the East in general. His fascination with Moorish architecture, for instance, is evinced in *Historia de los templos de España*, while his first *leyenda*, "El caudillo de las manos rojas" demonstrates the author's profound identification with the Eastern world. Imitating Oriental writing techniques and style—the close association of music and word, the expression of love and other emotions, the portrayal of nature as if filtered through mist and visited by spirits. Also intrigued by the East and an ardent devoté of the third-century poet Eben al Rumi, Lord Byron was a special inspiration to Bécquer, whose *Melodías andaluzas* was an obvious imitation of the English poet's *Hebrew Melodies*. The German poet Heinrich Heine was another early influence for the *Rimas*, as were Victor Hugo and José Zorrilla, both of whom had knowledge of the Arabic poetic tradition.

The third section of *Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular* deals with the poet's use of the conventions and forms of popular poetry. As Benítez makes clear, Bécquer's generation customarily read

the ancient *romances*, but also the "modern" *romances* written by Zorrilla and the Duque de Rivas. Some of the *leyendas* incorporate tales and formal characteristics borrowed from the *romances*, yet the narrative quality of that typically Spanish genre appealed less to the poet and his contemporaries than the *balada*'s more lyrical style. Benítez shows how Bécquer, from childhood on, had a singular interest in the imaginary creatures of Scandinavian and Northern European lore, so it is no surprise that such legends as "La Corza blanca," "El rayo de luna," and "Los ojos verdes" do not take place in Andalusian or even Spanish settings; they are related instead to Anglo-Saxon or Germanic traditions. As for the *copla*, only two or three of the *Rimas* conform perfectly to the definition of that popular genre, with its characteristically epigrammatic conclusion. Yet the *copla* was not without significance to Bécquer, since he incorporated two *coplas* into the narration of the tragic *leyenda* "La venta de los gatos." Indeed, in his perception the very spirit of the *copla* resided in the poetic expression of anguish and desperation, and these are precisely the tones resonating throughout Bécquer's work as a whole.

In the fourth section of the book, "Rasgos internos," Benítez turns his attention to the strategies Bécquer employed in transforming emotions into poetry. Critics have routinely identified as integral to popular poetry the direct expression of feeling, formal simplicity, and musicality (184), but these characteristics are not the exclusive domain of popular poetry. Rather, the relationship between *poesía popular* and *poesía culta* is mutually enriching, as the example of Bécquer clearly illustrates. The conversational tone of the *Rimas* is akin to the confessional quality of the epistolary genre—a tone achieved by Bécquer's conscious use of oral elements typically found in the traditional lyric. Among the poet's arsenal of resources are repetitions, fixed phrases, epithets, antitheses, refrains—signs of orality that facilitate memory, imbue the verses with temporality, and thus underscore the ephemeral quality of the emotions expressed. As is true of popular poetry in general, rhetorical devices and figurative language are infrequent in the *Rimas*, whereas similes, primitive poetry's most natural form of expression, abound. In Benítez's analysis, the frequency of the simile suggests "[. . .] una actitud casi ontológica, [ya que] Bécquer descubre en la realidad esencias ocultas que la transforman en un universo espiritualizado y misterioso" (217). By the same token, the diversity of rhythms in Bécquer, the constant alternation between long and

short lines, the regular recurrence of parallelisms so often found in the Psalms and other Hebrew religious verse, infuse the poetry with a distinctly musical quality reminiscent at once of German *lieder* and Andalusian *cantares*,—again, popular models that the poet, himself adept at both piano and guitar, consciously imitated. For Rubén Benítez, the instances of *Rimas* set to music—Tomás Bretón and the young Albéniz, to name two—and the number of musical compositions written as parodies, are irrefutable evidence not only of the estimable musicality of Bécquer's writing, but also of their ability to endure in the readers' memory.

In his epilogue, the author elaborates precisely on the question of the durability of the popular tradition and specifically, of the Sevillian poet's continuing importance in Spanish letters. To illustrate the former, Benítez cites no less than Lope de Vega, who authored his own *Rimas* in 1609, and who identified almost completely with the Spanish *pueblo*. The Romantics too imitated popular poetic forms, and Antonio Machado theorized later about how a *poeta culto* might "hacerse pueblo" in order to better imitate popular models. Machado's contemporary, Miguel de Unamuno, was also inspired to imitate the *Rimas*, while the pure, unadorned elegance of Bécquer's verses was admired and emulated variously by the modernists, Juan Ramón Jiménez, the poets of the 1937 generation, Rafael Alberti. To Carlos Bousoño, Bécquer embodied the poetic expression of profound emotion and created a vision of evanescent worlds that in turn redoubled the importance of the symbol.

With *Bécquer y la tradición de la lírica popular* Rubén Benítez has made an invaluable contribution not only to readers of Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, but to those interested in the history of Spanish popular poetry and, indeed, of Spanish poetry generally. The volume concludes with the previously published "Bécquer en sus textos (El arte de la corrección)." A most felicitous choice, since it is here that Benítez most convincingly argues his thesis that, far from being the *ingenio lego* he has been mistakenly reputed to be, his creative processes and, even more significantly, his methods of self-correction, demonstrate conclusively that Bécquer was steeped in the theory and the practice of the traditional popular lyric, utterly mindful of his creative choices and, quite possibly, aware that his words, enriched by his deeply musical sensibility, would endure in the memory of his readers.

Sylvia Sherno
University of California, Los Angeles

JIMÉNEZ POLANCO, JACQUELINE. Ed. *Divagaciones bajo la luna/Musing under the Moon. Voces e imágenes de lesbianas dominicanas/Voices and Images of Dominican Lesbians*. Santo Domingo, New York: Flacso, 2006. 184 pages.

Divagaciones bajo la luna/Musing under the Moon. Voces e imágenes de lesbianas dominicanas/Voices and Images of Dominican Lesbians presenta la oportunidad de adentrarse a un mundo quizá desconocido por muchos lectores. Este libro trae una variedad de temas lésbicos que enriquecerán el gusto por el erotismo, la diversidad y las incógnitas que surgen constantemente sobre la mujer lesbiana caribeña. A través de sus páginas se encuentran historias refrescantes pero también testimonios muy profundos sobre decisiones, experiencias, modos de vida, miedos, alegrías, en fin emociones que viven las lesbianas día a día. En ese contar sincero es que radica la novedad del texto y, por ende, su riqueza académica.

Divagaciones bajo la luna/Musing under the Moon es una antología de textos escritos por autoras veteranas y no tan veteranas. Las narraciones fluyen como corrientes de un río a las cuales les urge llegar a un extenso mar donde allí se les consideren como algo real, vívido e importante no como simples historias de mujeres lesbianas. Por lo tanto, el texto es uno **realmente lésbico** donde todas las autoras son lesbianas, se sienten lesbianas y están preparadas para dejar fluir sus más íntimos secretos, sentimientos, emociones y preocupaciones sin temor a ser rechazadas o juzgadas. De esta manera, en *Divagaciones* encuentran un foro donde sus voces son oídas quizá por primera vez.

La doctora Jacqueline Jiménez Polanco, editora de esta obra cuya importancia reside, entre otras cosas, en ser la primera en su género, alega en el prólogo del texto, que el lugar común de las anécdotas contadas, ya sean en forma de memorias, poemas, canciones o cuentos, es "[. . .] la experiencia lésbica de cada una [de las escritoras] y su expresión más genuina" (II). Añade además que todos los relatos "[. . .] cuestionan y critican la opresión, el rechazo, la negación y la discriminación que en múltiples y variadas dimensiones ejercen las sociedades patriarcales contra las mujeres, y sobre todo contra aquellas que aman a otras mujeres [. . .]" (II). De esta manera, queda estipulada la política clara y precisa que dirigirá al texto página tras página. El libro muestra un compromiso hacía el sentir de la mujer

lesbiana contra una sociedad opresora que a través de la historia ha creado un espacio cerrado, oscuro y poco alentador para ellas. Así el texto pondrá en relieve los verdaderos sentimientos de estas mujeres como símbolos del resto de las lesbianas que habitamos el planeta.

Divagaciones bajo la luna/Musing under the Moon contiene nueve partes que incluyen textos de un género literario específico como la poesía, las memorias, el cuento y la lírica. La primera parte lleva por título *Una escritora lésbica . . .* En ella se resaltan pensamientos cortos pero muy precisos que definen de alguna manera el sentir de una lesbiana hacía sí misma. En estas breves definiciones se va desde el sentir lo que es ser lesbiana hasta el compromiso que representa serlo. En la segunda parte del libro se recopilan memorias. Estas, unas escritas en inglés, otras en español, resaltan las experiencias vividas de las lesbianas específicamente en momentos cruciales como: la salida del tan llamado "closet;" las relaciones materno-filiales y el momento preciso en que se le comunica, a alguien en particular, por ejemplo, a la madre, lo que estas mujeres son y sienten; y de forma general, lo que ha sido vivir siendo dominicanas o dominicanyork y lesbianas. Lo que hace única esta parte de la obra es la espontaneidad con que se han escrito estas memorias y el flujo de sentimientos y emociones que se puede percibir después de cada oración leída o de cada experiencia contada. Todos los relatos memoriales recogen la esencia que permanece a lo largo de todo el texto y que lo convierte en una obra de singular importancia que debe ser incluida en el canon literario de los estudios Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender.

En la tercera parte del texto se recopilan dos ensayos que recogen el tema de la identidad y el género. Aquí cabe destacar el trabajo de Yuderkis Espinosa Miñoso quien por muchos años se ha dedicado a los estudios de género/identidad/feminismo en Argentina. Este es un ensayo profundo que propone el colocarse dentro del sexo opuesto para de alguna manera asumirlo y así encontrar nuestro propio rol. Todo dentro de los parámetros sociales establecidos contra esos parámetros individuales y personales que delinean a cada ser humano para quien la cuestión de género se convierte en un problema, una preocupación o simplemente una contradicción. El segundo ensayo, más informal, por la forma en que se desarrolla, que el primero, escrito por Dulce Reyes Bonilla, resulta una defensa a lo que es y lo que significa ser lesbiana. Es decir, en él se expone el por qué se es y se quiere ser lesbiana.

La siguiente área la componen una serie de textos líricos donde se destacan canciones escritas por la canta-autora dominicana Ochy Curiel y Deyanira García. Todos los textos aquí incluidos gozan de un agradable y certero ritmo, sin dejar a un lado la pasión y el compromiso que las describe. La quinta parte de *Divagaciones* consta de poesías. Esta es la sección más extensa del libro, sin embargo, comparte con el resto la misma exquisitez que define a su totalidad. Por último, se encuentra el área de la narrativa en la que se destacan cuentos que lucen por su vocabulario coloquial, juvenil y ameno entrelazado por una narrativa deliciosa que envuelve al lector en cada una de las ficciones que se presentan. En las tres últimas partes del texto encontramos una corta biografía de cada una de las autoras, una serie de documentos informativos que incluye el llamado para textos con el fin de ser incluidos en la obra y la motivación que dirige el haber hecho realidad un texto como éste. Por último, la doctora Jiménez Polanco nos facilita el índice de ilustraciones que se incluyen en el texto.

De esta manera queda establecido que, el lector que decida enfrentarse a este texto encontrará una amalgama de escritos llenos de profundidad sentimental, de emociones y de experiencias vividas que proveerán la oportunidad de enfrentarse a una parte de nuestra sociedad que a veces se olvida que existe. *Divagaciones bajo la luna/Musing under the Moon. Voces e imágenes de lesbianas dominicanas/Voices and Images of Dominican Lesbians* es un texto innovador, trabajado con seriedad y con compromiso lo que, precisamente, lo hace una joya literaria moderna. Es la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre los temas que en ocasiones socavan el interés público pero que por representar cohibiciones se eligen callar u obviar. Son precisamente todos estos componentes lo que hacen del texto una representación de la mujer lesbiana no tan solo dominicana sino también caribeña.

Joanna Dávila
University of California, Los Ángeles

Memory as Antidote: Remembering Repression from Latin America to Katrina

KLEIN, NAOMI. *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Toronto: Knopf, 2007. 662 pages.

> All shock therapists are intent on the erasure of memory.
>
> Recollections can be rebuilt, new narratives can be created. Memory, both individual and collective, turns out to be the greatest shock absorber of all. (557)

Naomi Klein's new book *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* recently published in September 2007 is a testament to the importance of memory. The book addresses the rise of what she calls "disaster capitalism." Klein is a prize-winner Canadian journalist who became famous with her book *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies* (Picador, 2000). In *The Shock Doctrine*, Klein explores how this new brand of economic activity has been on the rise since the 1950s, developed at the Chicago School of Economics, especially through the works of economist Milton Friedman, intellectual leader to the neo-liberal, free-market economy.

The author begins the book with an account of a North-American doctor who researched shock therapy in the 1950s, Ewen Cameron, who claimed that to maintain time and space image, two things are necessary: sensory input and memory (41), and that to erase both is to recreate a person. Klein draws a parallel between shock therapy and Friedman's economic shock treatment in the sense that both intend to erase perception and memory to create a blank slate, a *tabula rasa* in which to impose a "new personality," in the case of Cameron; and a new economical system, in the case of Friedman. The three tenets of Friedman's treatment are "[. . .] privatization, deregulation and cuts to government service" (534). According to Klein, the inauguration of a practical application of Friedman's doctrine started during Pinochet's authoritarian regime in Chile in 1973.

Despite being a journalistic account, Klein's new book is thoroughly researched, and among its most striking aspects lie the historical connections drawn between Latin American authoritarian regimes, Indonesia, South Africa, Poland, Russia, and China, in order

to arrive at the present moment: the Iraq occupation, Guantánamo Bay, Gaza strip conflicts, the 2004 tsunami in Asia, and the 2005 Katrina Hurricane disaster in New Orleans. The scope of the book is obviously wide. It is a critique of the disastrous aspects of economic globalization, and the use of technology to repress and censor, especially with the advent of a rapidly growing surveillance industry. The book stresses the importance of remembering history, and the many terrifying facets of historical amnesia. Klein's account follows the history of literal shock therapy and how the CIA conducted research on the subject, which was later applied to Latin American countries, such as Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Uruguay for interrogation through the means of torture. She also briefly mentions Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The importance of this book for Latin American Studies is not only to remember the thousands who were exiled, arrested, tortured, and disappeared during the military dictatorships, but this reportage also connects the political situation with economy. What is obvious to some in the field is, however, rarely stated: the free-market economy interest behind the military controlled regimes, and especially how debt accrued after the coups d'états. Those facts may be well known, but they are only recently remembered, especially when unmasking the strategizing of an intellectual elite directly connected to the corporate world. Since colonial times, Latin America has suffered the impacts of imperialism—political, economical and cultural—let alone structural poverty and racism, which have been reinforced by economical reforms that accompanied the shock treatment required by the Friedman's doctrine.

The economical shock treatment in Latin America was directly linked to a fight against developmentalism in the 1950s, which imposed too many public measures that benefited the people, and not the wealthy. The author comments that the "[. . .] most advanced laboratory of developmentalism was [. . .] the Southern Cone" (63), during a moment of expansion for the region; thus, the regime changes and direct military interventions in Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973, Argentina in 1976, etc. Friedman helped Pinochet draw his economic plan for Chile, along with other plans sketched by Friedman's students, which resulted in the economical "miracle" in 1970s Latin America. It is a well known fact that the miracles were a mirage, and the results disastrous to those who were left to pay the debts under

strict impositions by the IMF and the World Bank. Those countries that suffered the shock treatment are still recovering at a price of massive privatization, and very few benefits.

There was a "[. . .] larger plan to impose 'pure' capitalism on Latin America" (142), and the lesson the military dictatorships taught us are of a collective trauma and devastating consequences of repression. Throughout the books' account of the Argentine, Chilean, and Brazilian military junta's impact on those countries, Klein points out to a rhetoric of cleansing, as though torture was a cure for sick countries, or at least a lesson to those who opposed their master plan of liberal economy. Klein also points out to a lack of connection between political conflict and economics in the general perception or representation of history. The imposition of authoritarian regimes is indeed connected to economical reforms, which only increase the disparity between the rich and the poor. This disconnect comes from an attempt to amnesia, which perpetuates the idea that the privileged few are spreading freedom and democracy to all.

Klein signals that the rise of the human rights movement was sponsored by the same institutions in the United States who had initially sponsored the dictatorships in Latin America (such as the Ford Foundation). In her account, human rights activism fails to take into consideration the economical origins of the abuses. Once again, Klein reports on a common detachment that seems to ignore the nuances between politics and economics. For instance, in the human rights sponsored books called "Never Again," which denounce torture during the regimes in Latin America, the author claims that only the Brazilian one has acknowledged the link between economy and the regime's atrocities. Klein's account presents the struggle for sovereignty in Latin America as suffering without poetic justice. She ends the book, however, on a positive note, especially with the recent resistance of further privatization in places like Bolivia, and particularly Venezuela.

Initially, the book seems to be symptomatic of its own medicine, since the images of shock therapy and brutal regimes provoke a certain discomfort in the reader. Her style is somewhat colorful, and even didactic at moments, given that she is non-partisan but engaged in activism against globalization and free-market economies. To say that Klein's book does not participate in academic argumentation is to take the book out of context. She makes her claim explicit by linking

the people involved in the authoritarian regimes in Latin America with those involved in the war industry, as best exemplified in Iraq. The United States interventions in Latin America through CIA support is well known in the field, and the connections Klein makes are part and parcel of her argumentation. Despite the journalistic tone and personal accounts, Klein provides facts hard to deny in the face of an industry that is clearly taking advantage of disasters caused by mismanagement—as was the case in New Orleans after the Katrina Hurricane disaster.

Overall, the book discusses the role of the intellectual in policy making, and how an economics doctrine may dominate the market, and its subsequent impact in the lives of people all over the globe. The shock doctrine is an exercise of "extreme privatization" (508), which not only helps to increase the gap between the rich and the poor to widen, but that also takes advantage of disasters, natural or political. Klein provides a sober account of a brutal history. This book is important to the intersections between academia and coherent journalism. In the field of Latin American Studies, the significance of journalists who braved authoritarian regimes is evident in those who were persecuted and disappeared during decades of horrors, and who had to masquerade their work in order to publish. Now, Klein has the freedom to denounce, as few had in the countries she reports on.

Forgiving might not play a role in Klein's account, but memory is essential and vital for reconstruction. Klein points out the importance of grassroots movements and community in countries like Argentina, Chile and Brazil to rebuild after a collective trauma that took many lives, imposed brutality, and bankrupted those countries. The old adage "never forget" has taking new meaning while facing an economic system that insists on effacing all memory. Klein compares the blank slate and erasure required by both the shock doctrine and religious fundamentalism: the first with its intentions of erasing history and starting anew with private investments; the latter with the intention of erasing memory for the sake of rapture (561). The book is a portrait of opportunism, and an ode to remembering.

Alessandra Santos
University of British Columbia, Vancouver

LÓPEZ MORÍN, JOSÉ R. *The Legacy of Américo Paredes.* College Station, Texas: Texas A&M UP, 2006. 167 pp.

Like all movements, movements in academia have their originators, and Américo Paredes (1915-1999) deserves to be considered as a father-figure of what is today known as Border Studies, namely the recognition that the boundaries between peoples and cultures are often dynamic spaces of creativity and conflict, and that the frontier is seldom a bright line of demarcation but is instead a porous area of interchange. Paredes, who taught English and anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin for over three decades, is perhaps best known for his pioneering study of the folk ballads of the Texas-Mexico borderlands where he grew up, *With his Pistol in his Hand: A Border Ballad and its Hero* (1958). Like a latter-day Abraham, Don Américo (as he was known by students) led his discipline of Folklore studies out of the old country of romanticism and mythologizing and into new, dangerous, and promising territories of cultural studies and ethnography. At least that is the case made in *The Legacy of Américo Paredes* by José López Morín, Associate Professor of Chicano Studies at California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Though concise (167 pages, including notes, bibliography and index), *The Legacy of Américo Paredes* covers a good deal of ground. The author, who knew and corresponded with Paredes, offers an engaging and learned analysis of his life and work. From his birth and early childhood in Brownsville, Texas, to his years at UT Austin, we follow Paredes's evolution from a restless teenage poet writing lines such as "Why was I ever born / Proud of my southern race, / If I must seek my sun / In an Anglo-Saxon face" (38), into a groundbreaking scholar who would challenge the assumptions of folklore, anthropology, and ethnography, and along the way help give birth to the new field of Chicano Studies.

Written in a clear and appealing prose, this book will be of interest to teachers of undergraduate courses in American Latino literature or ethnic studies as well as senior scholars interested in situating Paredes's *oeuvre* within the contemporary critical framework. For those without specialized knowledge of the American Southwest, López Mórin's study begins with some useful background on the history of the Mexico-Texas borderlands, dating back to the time of the first Spanish explorations. According to the author, after a turbulent

initial period of attempted colonization and indigenous resistance, a unique and advantageous *modus vivendi* developed along the Lower Río Grande, in which both Spanish and Indian residents maintained a degree of autonomy and self-determination: "[. . .] a mestizo culture, or blending of different cultural groups, began to evolve and thrive [. . .] away from the Mexican and U.S. governments" (10). This agrarian lifestyle with its ranch-based economy would be threatened and eventually vanquished by the U.S. westward expansion and the consequent introduction of a capitalistic financial system. These historical forces helped form the matrix from which were drawn the Mexico-Texan folk ballads so dear to Américo Paredes.

As a young man, Paredes grew up imbued with the rhythms of music and poetry. Américo learned to play the guitar at an early age, despite the protests of his father, a lover of Spanish poetry who did not hide his disdain for popular music. Américo's differences with his father did not impede him from developing a deep love for the written word, in the languages of Cervantes and Shakespeare, both of which he commanded with native fluency. This grounding in both English and Spanish canonical literature would eventually allow Paredes to appreciate the particularities and inflections of the Spanish spoken along the Río Grande. Yet as a Mexico-Tejano, Paredes lived what Morín has defined as an "in-between existence:" a sense of being neither fully Mexican nor fully American, yet being both at the same time. This "in-betweenness" would eventually give birth to his work at UT Austin, defining theory of folklore as performance, an expressive space inhabited by the artist between the work performed and the public receiving it.

At the core of *The Legacy of Américo Paredes* is Paredes' seminal work, *With his Pistol in his Hand: A Border Ballad and its Hero* (1958). By now an almost universally required reading for students of Chicano literature, the book is a scholarly study of a famous Spanish-language ballad, "El corrido de Gregorio Cortez." As Morín points out, it is impossible to pigeon-hole *With his Pistol in his Hand*: part folklore, part sociolinguistics, part anthropology, it helped to redefine the boundaries between these disciplines and to challenge the prevailing view of Mexican American culture as a series of bastardized customs with no authentic voice. In subsequent years, *With his Pistol in his Hand* achieved cult status among young Chicano activists in the 1960s seeking a narrative to support their nascent ideology of

resistance. The author provides an overview of the book for those unfamiliar with it and a summary of its critical reception to the present day, as well as a critique of the 1984 motion picture *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, which featured a young Edward James Olmos as Cortez. According to Morín, among the flaws of the film was its coarse portrayal of Cortez, one which bothered Américo Paredes and "[. . .] robbed him of his dignity and courage" (95).

In the fourth and final chapter, "Toward New Perspectives in Folklore and Cultural Anthropology," Morín stakes his strongest claim: namely that Paredes "[. . .] articulated an idea of performance that anticipated the postmodern movement in cultural anthropology—a movement that inspires the protection of primitive and local cultures from First World attempts to reorganize them" (97). Through his work on the folklore of the Mexico/Texas border region the author of *With his Pistol in his Hand* ultimately subverted the paradigm of the fieldworker who observes the cultural production of another people from the "outside," and empowered the "observed" to have a voice through the performance of their songs, legends, and jests on their own terms. This he did through the publication of his 1977 essay, "On Ethnographic Work among Minority Groups: A Folklorist's Perspective," arguing that the perceived expectations of the ethnographer often conditioned the responses of the individuals relied on as informants. In order to decipher the complex set of visual and aural markers indicating irony, flattery, or sarcasm, a researcher needed a deep knowledge of the culture under investigation, one that was almost impossible to attain for an outsider. Paredes's concept of "folklore as performance" aided him in offering a counterpoint to traditional anthropological methods, a concept which, Morín maintains, anticipated the postmodern revolution in the social sciences yet never receiving the credit it deserved.

While the focus of Paredes's scholarship was arguably the demolition of U.S. stereotypes about Mexican Americans, he also engaged in sparring matches with Mexican intellectuals, most notably the poet Octavio Paz. Incensed by the disparaging depictions of Mexican Americans in Paz's well-known work, *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950, rev. 1959), Paredes accused the Nobel laureate of reducing the image of young Mexican-Americans to a stereotype that was no less bigoted than those employed by Anglo-Americans. Moreover, Paredes took issue with Paz's overly oedipal evaluation of Mexican

machismo, arguing that in some aspects *machismo* reflected nothing more than the ideals of courage commemorated in the folk songs of all nations; and that there was no evidence to suppose that in its most exaggerated "Mexican" forms machismo "[. . .] even existed in Mexico before the Revolution" (119), an insight which effectively vitiated Paz's analysis.

Morín has done a great service by rendering the work of Américo Paredes available to a broad audience, and it is natural that a work about such a complex figure should bear some shortcomings, one of which is the use of less-than precise terminology at times. When dealing with the ethnic groups that populate the Texas-Mexico borderlands, the subjects of Paredes' studies are designated as "Mexicans," "border Mexicans," "Mexico-Tejanos," "Mexican Americans," in contrast to the dominant culture north of the Río Grande, which is alternately referred to as "American," "North American," "Anglo-American," "Anglo-Texan," or simply "Anglo." Many of these names are used interchangeably throughout the text, though in becoming familiar with Paredes' work, the reader will note that they are not always equivalents. Regarding the use the word "Mexican" to designate the peoples of Mexican extraction living in Texas, Américo Paredes himself argued that what developed along the Río Grande was not merely a subset of Mexican culture, but rather a unique hybrid. Moreover, is "Anglo" the best term to describe both the culture of the English-speaking settlers that entered the Texas-Mexico borderlands during the 19th century as well as the dominant U.S. Texan culture one hundred years hence? Perhaps the answer is "yes," but a scholarly book of this caliber could have benefited from a definition of terms at its outset.

The above criticism notwithstanding, to write a treatise on a scholar of the stature of Américo Paredes is a daunting task, which Morín has accomplished with great skill. Given the amount of material that Paredes published, this will not be the last word on the legacy of Don Américo, nor should it be. Instead, readers should be thankful that there is now available an erudite, accessible, and engaging introduction to the father of Border Studies.

Damian Bacich
San José State University

In Memoriam

Professor Guillermo E. Hernández (1940-2006)
Professor Carroll B. Johnson (1938-2007)

XXX

Man's mortal life, a year so short,
Sweeps all in its wake, repulsing the bold
Sword with its steel, the marble slab so cold
Which against time pits its strength to no purport.

The foot, before it knows how to sport,
Moves on the path to death, where my life so old
And dark I send, a river muddy and thick like mold,
Which the waves imbibe in their onslaught.

Each brief moment is a lengthy pace
Which on this march despite myself I take,
For I press on when at rest or when asleep.

A sigh so brief, so final, and so base
Is death whose legacy I cannot forsake;
But if it is not Nemesis but law, why do I weep? (32)

XXXI

Oh how between my hands you slide!
Oh how, my life, you squirm and slip!
What stealthy steps on cold death's trip
While trampling pomp, vanity, and pride!

Its ladders hand from my besieged side,
The coward that I am confirms its grip;
Each day ceded by Time's ghostly ship
Is a new life borne on its sail so wide.

Oh fragile state of man's earthly paradise
That I cannot want to see another day
Without fear of seeing my demise.

Each moment of this human fray
Is a new reason to emphasize
How weak it is, how useless, and how gray. (33)

Translations by C. Brian Morris
Quevedo, Francisco de. *Obras completas I. Poesía original.*
Ed. José Manuel Blecua. Barcelona: Planeta, 1963.

Contributors

Damian Bacich is an Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages at San José State University, California. His field of research is Early Modern Spanish and Colonial Spanish American literatures, including the literature of the Spanish borderlands.

Gabriel Ignacio Barreneche is an Assistant Professor at Rollins College, Florida where he teaches contemporary Latin American Literature. His research interests include Cuban exile literature, postmodern Latin American fiction as well as innovations in language pedagogy. He received his Ph.D. in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from UCLA in 2003.

Eduardo Barros Grela is an Assistant Professor of Spanish at California State University, Northridge, where he teaches courses on contemporary Spanish literature. His publications include essays on postfeminism and Latino studies, and his current research focuses on ecocriticism, urban theory, and posthumanism.

Andrea Colvin is a doctoral candidate in the Deparment of Spanish and Portuguese at the Unviersity of California, Irvine. She received her B.A. in Spanish Education from the University of Delaware and her M.A. in Spanish from the University of California, Irvine. Her research interests include Contemporary Latin American Narrative, specifically the post-dictatorial novel (1980-present), the representation of political violence, survival and memory, the relationship between fantasy and trauma, and the use of the child's perspective.

Joanna Dávila nació en Humacao, Puerto Rico. En el 1992, culminó sus estudios de subgrado en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. En 1998, se trasladó a San José, California donde en 2004 completó sus estudios de Maestría con concentración en español. El mismo año comenzó sus estudios de Doctorado en la Universidad de California, Los Ángeles. Actualmente, está en su cuarto año de estudios preparando su tesis cuyo tema consiste en la construcción y representaciones del lesbianismo en el Caribe a través de las literaturas de la República Dominicana y Puerto Rico.

Elena Deanda Camacho es mexicana y estudiante del doctorado en español en Vanderbilt University, en Nashville, Tennessee. Tiene la licenciatura en literatura española por la Universidad Veracruzana y la maestría en artes por parte de Vanderbilt University. Además ha tomado cursos de filosofía, historia de las religiones y literatura medieval en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, el Instituto Mircea Eliade y la Université Toulouse Le Mirail, Francia. Sus intereses de investigación se centran en el post–estructuralismo, la teoría de la performance, la teoría crítica, los estudios post–coloniales y de género. Actualmente es becaria del Center for Studies of Religion and Culture 2007–2008 y del Gobierno de Veracruz. Elena estudia las políticas del folklore colonial y las poéticas del discurso inquisitorial en el siglo de las luces en España y la Nueva España.

Joshua Alma Enslen is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia. He received his M.A. in Romance Languages from the University of Georgia in 2004 and his B.M. in Jazz Studies and Music Media from the University of Alabama in 2002. Mr. Enslen is currently writing his dissertation on the historical development and the politico-cultural ramifications of the relationship between literature and diplomacy in Brazil.

Alexandra Falek is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures at New York University. She is presently writing her dissertation about current cultural production related to memory in post-authoritarian society, with a focus on recent fictional narratives from Uruguay. She holds a B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. Research interests include 20th and 21st century literatures and cultures of the Americas, narrative fiction, cultural memory, writers in exile, visual studies (film and photography), translation, and migration studies.

Nicola Gavioli is a doctoral student in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Califonia, Santa Barbara. His research interests include: Luso-Brazilian literature, Mexican and Cuban contemporary novel, Comparative literature, and Trauma Studies.

Dilton Cândido Santos Maynard é professor assistente da Universidade Estadual de Alagoas, onde leciona as disciplinas Introdução aos Estudos Históricos, Teoria da História e História do Nordeste. Possui

graduação em História pela Universidade Federal de Sergipe (1999) e mestrado em Sociologia pela Universidade Federal de Sergipe (2002). Atualmente realiza o seu Doutorado em História pela Universidade Federal de Pernambuco. Tem pesquisado sobre a história do Brasil no século XX, abordando diferentes produções culturais (radiodifusão, biografias, modernismo, cinema). A sua tese de doutorado versará sobre os usos sociais das memórias de Delmiro Gouveia.

C. Brian Morris was educated in Wales and England; he graduated from the University of Manchester with First-Class Honors in Spanish and French in 1955 and, in 1957, with an M.A.; the University of Hull awarded him a D.Litt. in 1975. In 1980 he joined the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UCLA as Full Professor, and was given the title of Distinguished Professor in 2004. He retired in March 2007. He has written extensively on twentieth-century Spanish literature; the writers and fields that have most consistently engaged him are Rafael Alberti, Federico García Lorca, Surrealism, and the cinema.

Alessandra Santos received a B.A. in Comparative Literature from UC Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from UCLA. Her research examines appropriations and the artistic implications of production and consumption. She is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Andrés Pérez Simón trabaja actualmente en una tesis doctoral sobre teatro experimental europeo en el Centro de Literatura Comparada de la Universidad de Toronto, donde completó su M.A. en 2006. También colabora en funciones docentes e investigadoras con el departamento de Español de la misma universidad. Antes de llegar a Canadá realizó estudios en España (Licenciado en Periodismo, Licenciado en Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Doctor en Literatura Inglesa de la Universidad de Jaén). Sus áreas de interés son la teoría literaria, el teatro europeo de vanguardia y la novela moderna española y europea.

Fiona Schouten is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Romance Languages and Cultures (Faculty of Arts) at Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Her research project "Desmemorización and literary memory" investigates memory narratives of the Francoist dictatorship and the Spanish Civil War in fourteen Spanish novels

written after 1990, and touches on such subjects as nostalgia, haunting, and autobiography. Her research interests include literature as a memory medium, and the role of traumatic pasts in global or local cultural identity processes.

Sylvia Sherno has been a lecturer in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UCLA for 24 years. She has published articles on the poetry of Blas de Otero, José Ángel Valente, Blanca Andreu, and Ana Rossetti. She is the author of *Weaving the World: The Poetry of Gloria Fuertes* and co-editor, with Cecile West-Settle, of *The Word and the World. Essays in Honor of Andrew P. Debicki.*

Juan Velasco received his first Ph.D. in 1992 from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain. His area of specialization was Contemporary Latin American Literature. In 1995, he received his second Ph.D. from UCLA. His area of specialization was Contemporary Chicano/a Literature. He taught at the University of Kansas, and since 2000 he has taught at Santa Clara University. His first novel, *Enamorado*, was published in Spain in 2000. He wrote the foreword for the anthology *Under the Fifth Sun: Latino Literature from California* (2002) and published the book *Las fronteras móviles: tradición y modernidad en la Literatura Chicana contemporánea* (2003).

MESTER

XXXVII

Call for Papers

WRITING AND REWRITING: THE DYNAMICS OF COMPETING VOICES

The relation between or among the pluralistic discourses that represent the complex as well as broad Spanish, Spanish American, Portuguese, and Brazilian social spectrum, has often been presented as polar, binary, top-down (center vs. periphery and dominant vs. marginal). However, this scheme has been increasingly challenged and revised as critics, without necessarily discarding the power relation, have begun to appreciate negotiations as a crucial component in the dynamics of competing voices. **But are negotiations always viable? If not, why not? If so, to what extent? What are the negotiations that take place? Or, are there alternative models with which to discuss the dynamics of competing voices? What are they?**

In this Special Issue, *Mester*, the graduate student academic journal of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, invites scholars in the fields of Spanish, Spanish American, Luso-Brazilian, and Latino/a literatures and linguistics to submit articles exploring and reflecting on this topic, preferably but not exclusively, in relation to the questions posited above.

Possible areas of interest include, but are by no means limited to, the following: Gender and Sexuality, Ethnicity, Religion, (Visual) Art, Geopolitics, Social History, and Economics.

Articles may be written in Spanish, Portuguese, or English. Publication decisions are based solely on the quality of manuscripts, which undergo triple-blind review.

To be considered for publication, manuscripts should follow closely these guidelines:

- Have no fewer than 15 (3750 words) and no more than 25 double-spaced pages (8000 words), including endnotes and Works Cited (the bibliography should start on a new page).
- Use Times New Roman font, size 12 point and number all pages, including the bibliography.
- Follow the conventions of the most current edition of the MLA Style Manual.
- Please do not write your name on the manuscripts but include it in your cover letter along with the title of your article, your institutional affiliation, e-mail, work and/or home address.
- Reviews for works published within the past year are accepted for the following categories: academic books, linguistics, film and fiction. Reviews should be between 500 and 1,200 words in length. Publishers and authors are welcome to submit books for possible selection.
- Please send complete submissions electronically (via e-mail) and use Microsoft Word 95 or higher.
- Submissions that are being considered by another journal or any other publisher are not accepted.

The deadline is February 22, 2008, but early submissions are encouraged.

Please forward all required materials or questions to:

Mester
Attn: Laura Lee, Editor-in-Chief
llee@humnet.ucla.edu
Department of Spanish and Portuguese, UCLA

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CONTRIBUTORS